

SIGN USED FOR CENTURIES

Probably the Three Golden Balls is the Oldest Symbol Known to Civilized World.

In the days when only a few people could read, emblems and pictures were used instead of letters for advertisement. One of the best known street signs surviving from those days is the pawnbroker's sign: three golden balls. One story of its origin is the legend of St. Nicholas and three dowries he gave the daughter of a pauperized nobleman in Asia Minor.

HEAR FOOTSTEPS OF SPIDER

Microphone Able to Detect Sounds Which Would Seem to Be Absolutely Inaudible.

Two scientists have been listening to the tramp of a spider.

By means of the ordinary carbon microphone very faint sounds can be detected, and long ago, David Edward Hughes, one of the pioneers of wireless and the inventor of the microphone we now use on our telephones, was able to hear on his microphone the tramp of a fly.

There are some wonderful crystals which, when subjected to intermittent pressure, give rise to electric currents and give forth sounds, and they, too, can be used to magnify inaudible noises. Crystals of quartz, tourmalin, feldspar, sugar, camphor, and so on, have these remarkable properties; but the crystals most responsive to pressure are the crystals of rochelle salt which are found in selditz powders.

By means of these rochelle salt crystals two electricians, Mrs. Russell and Mr. Cotton, have lately been able to hear a small spider walking about. They do not describe the sound of the spider's footfall; but we should imagine that it would be more of a shuffle than a fox-trot. Certainly not a two-step!—Montreal Family Herald.

Words Wrongly Used.

The following are some words that are often wrongly used: "decided," for instance means "strong"; "decisive" means "final"; a decided opinion is quite different from a decisive opinion. "Each other" should never be used for "one another"; "guess" is loosely used for "suppose," "expect" or "intend," but such use is avoided by the best writers; "party" should never be used for "person"; "further" means additional, "farther" refers to distance; "propose," meaning "to offer," should not be confused with "purpose," meaning "to intend"; "discover" is to find something which previously existed; "invent" is to produce something for the first time; "locate" is a vulgarism, when used for "settle"; "perception" means the inlet of all the materials of knowledge; "apperception" means the knowledge that one possesses these materials; a man with perception knows, a man with apperception knows that he knows.

Another "Porterhouse" Story.

One of the most popular and widely-known eating houses in southern Ireland at the time the corn laws and tithes in Ireland ran out along about 1836, was the "Two Pot House" in Cork. That meant that one could get potatoes and bread and butter and two pots of porter, together with getting one's steak cooked, for one shilling (or 25 cents).

The custom was for the wayfarer to Cork to buy a steak at some place en route and bring it with him to the "Two Pot House." Thus after a time it became the designation for the meal of porter and steak, and subsequently a porterhouse steak—meaning a steak of one's own at the porter house.

Thus, goes one of the numerous stories of its origin, came the term "porterhouse steak."

Famous Writers Dull Companions.

Many of the most brilliant and witty authors have been known to be very dull and uninteresting when engaged in conversation with other persons.

Descartes, the famous mathematician and philosopher; La Fontaine, celebrated for his witty fables, and Buffon, the naturalist, were all singularly deficient in the power of conversation. Marmontel, the novelist, was so dull in society that a friend said to him after an interview, "I must go and read one of your tales in recompense to myself for the weariness of hearing you."

Australia Far Behind.

Although they cover approximately the same area, the United States has about 250,000 miles of railroad and Australia about 26,000.

WILL ALWAYS HAVE GENIUS

British Scientists Disagree With Eminent American Professor on Statement Put Forth.

British scientists don't agree with Professor Terman, the American psychologist, when he says the number of geniuses in the future is destined to be comparatively few. It is said in London that the professor's remarks were due to a fear that the standard of American character and intelligence is deteriorating in consequence of its growing alien population. Scientists in England think that so long as intellectual families continue to intermarry discriminately there will be no danger of a slump in geniuses. Geniuses, they say, is simply a matter of heredity and quote the following families as instances: Darwin, Erasmus, Charles and Francis, were all first-rate members of science. Bach: More than 200 members of this family distinguished themselves. In the family of Samuel Butler there were several geniuses. They also quote the brothers Haldane, one of whom became lord chancellor and the other an eminent physiologist, also the Cecils, Balfours, Coleridges and numerous other families which have produced the genius in every generation, confirming the theory that genius is a consequence of heredity.—Montreal Family Herald.

OBSERVING HABITS OF FISH

Experiments Have Resulted in Knowledge That is Both Valuable and Interesting.

Some thirty-five or more years ago extensive experiments in tagging fish were made. Small fish were released alive with the date inscribed on the tag. Enough of these tags were eventually recovered to give the commission data on which to judge the wanderings of these fish. In the case of ground fish, that is, fish that feed on the bottom, it was ascertained that they generally remained close to where they were liberated.

Fishermen in their way have always made certain tests of their own, a favorite experiment being on a chicken halibut in the days when those fish were of no value. The flat side of the halibut offered an excellent marking base, and the fisherman with his sharp bait knife and a few deft strokes, scored his initials and the date of the incision and released the fish. Quite a number of these were eventually caught, some after reaching maturity, the inscriptions plainly showing in the healed-over scars.

Remains Many Centuries Old.

An interesting discovery has been made in the Forfar (Scotland) district. While workmen were engaged digging on a hillside in the Law park on the Idvies estate near Forfar in order to make a waterway for a tank being erected in connection with the Idvies tennis court, they came upon a stone cist about six feet below the earth surface. The cist was composed of flagstones with a large specimen on top, and when this was removed a considerable number of human bones and a clay urn were found. The urn was blackened as if by fire, and many of the bones also had a charred appearance. Unfortunately when one of the workmen attempted to lift and remove the urn, which is flat bottomed and of the size of an ordinary flower pot, marked round with corded or indented bands, it gave way in his hands and was broken.

Odd Turn of Fate.

By a strange trick of fate the French are now cutting down a forest in the Rhineland which was planted more than a century ago by their ancestors. When during the Revolution the Rhine provinces were occupied by French armies they cut down the timber in the privately owned forests of Hansrueck, Eifel and Haardt which later became a part of the Reich's holdings. The French on taking possession of the left bank of the Rhine found it necessary to replant these devastated areas and imported large quantities of Norwegian pines and similar trees from Savoye and the Pyrenees. Before the World war the Germans considered cutting down these trees planted by the French but the forestry experts advised waiting until 1920 when they would be fully matured. According to the best estimates this delay cost the German empire at least 500,000,000 francs.

Department's Good Work.

Over 90 per cent of cases involving the loss of goods in transit, particularly perishable, for which weather conditions may be responsible, are settled without ever coming into court, after consultation with the weather bureau of the United States Department of Agriculture. The report of the weather bureau as to its records of temperature and other conditions along the route in question is usually accepted as final in such disputes. Sometimes the shipper and sometimes the railroad or steamship line is the one to ask for the evidence of the weather bureau, but both sides accept the impartial records in the government files.

Where "Doughboy" Came From.

The word "doughboy," a slang military term applied to a soldier in the United States army, dates from the Civil war, when the large globular brass buttons were used on infantry uniforms. These buttons were called "doughboys" because they were a reminder of boiled dumplings of raised dough that are so frequently served in ships' messes, and are known to all sailors as "doughboys."

RUSSIA FAR BEHIND WORLD

Percentage of Illiteracy, Shown by National Census, Constitutes a National Disgrace.

The last all-Russian national census carried out by the central statistical bureau of the soviet government in August, 1920, showed the per capita percentage of literacy for the entire population at 32 per cent, says L. J. Lewery in Current History.

In other words 680 people in Russia out of 1,000 can neither read nor write. Excluding children under eight, the percentage of illiteracy still amounts to 60 per cent. As is the case in all backward countries, the female population lags far behind the male. By locality, it is found that illiteracy increases centrifugally from Moscow toward the outlying parts of Russia, but more steeply in the eastern direction toward Siberia, the Caucasus and the Transcasian republics. Thus, in the Samarkand province of Turkestan the totally illiterate population constitutes 94.5 per cent of the total.

In Russia proper there were registered 27,500,000 totally illiterate persons above the age of eight; in the Ukraine, 12,000,000; in the autonomous Federated Republic 6,000,000, and so forth—a grand total of 54,000,000 souls above school age.

By profession or occupation, the highest standard of literacy was found in the soviet army and in the navy. Taking the entire able-bodied working population of soviet Russia between the ages of sixteen and fifty, there were found 73 per cent of males and 36 per cent of females who can neither read or write, or both.

RELICS OF TIMES LONG PAST

Discoveries Made in Texas Will Excite the Interest of Archeologists Everywhere.

While digging in an old gravel pit near Onalaska, Tex., at a depth of 15 feet, a graven rock image or idol was found by F. M. Burke. Nearby was unearthed the skeleton of a mastodon of greater size than any heretofore brought to light in Texas.

According to scientists, the prehistoric animal roamed the earth between 400,000 and 500,000 years ago. The sculptured image may have belonged to a civilization that was contemporaneous with the existence of the mastodon.

The discovery has aroused the deepest interest on the part of members of the faculty of the State Agricultural and Mechanical college, who are investigating the bones and other relics found in the gravel pit.

Besides the skeleton, other scattered bones of extraordinary size are being found as the excavation progresses.

A lower leg bone was found to be five and one-half feet long. A jawbone with the teeth intact weighs about 70 pounds.—Exchange.

Belonged to Prehistoric Times.

The stone cist, containing the remains of a prehistoric human, found on a farm at Catterline, Kincardineshire, had lain there 3,500 years or more, it is believed now. Dr. Alex Low, archeologist of Aberdeen university, has decided the rude urn belongs to an early period of the Bronze age, and he believes the skeleton is that of a person who was buried in the period of 2000 to 1500 B. C. Relics of the Bronze age had been uncovered before in this locality, but this find is of much more importance than the previous ones. Doctor Low says the skeleton appears to be that of a person whose height was about 5 feet 7 inches. The skull is of the brachycephalic type—short and of excessive breadth. The head was round and with a full forehead; the face was broad and short. The body had been placed in the cist in a crouching position, lying on the left side, the head facing to the east. The left hand was under the head and the right under the chin; the knees were bent.

Shoes From Skins of Snakes.

The latest footwear for the society woman in London is shoes made from the skins of reptiles. Snakeskin, owing to its beautiful marking, is most sought after. Not many women, however, have obtained these shoes, for besides being very expensive, the supply is extremely limited. Exclusive shoemakers use the golden anaconda, a 30-foot monster found in Mexico, the boa-constrictor from Africa, the python from Southern Nigeria, and the yellow-jack from India, though the amount of skin from each snake that can be used is so small that few pairs of shoes can be turned out in a month. The skin of the little Burma lizard arrives in England in larger quantities and the best stores have footwear made from it.

Norway Holds Lost Harpoon.

In the carcass of a whale caught in the Davis strait, Greenland, and recently brought into a Norwegian port, the head of an old harpoon has been found, deeply imbedded in the blubber.

Experts declare that the whale must have carried the harpoon in its body for some fifty years, since it is of a pattern used by American whalers when they fished the Greenland coasts half a century ago.

Affluence.

Our idea of affluence used to be two pairs of suspenders. Later we changed that to the belief that luxury consisted of being able to buy golf balls by the box. Now we are of the opinion that absolute independence must be to be able to buy a complete set of new tires for the car whenever the old ones begin to show signs of wearing out.—Exchange.

CAN CHALLENGE THE WORLD

New York's Fifth Avenue Said to Be the Smartest Street That Any City Can Show.

It is not an exaggeration to say that on a bright spring day in no city in the world is there a highway so altogether attractive as Fifth avenue from Thirty-fourth street to Fifty-ninth street. The most plebeian vehicle is the bus, and that charges double the fare of other cars, which suggests a corresponding sense of superiority, Raymond G. Carroll writes from New York to the Philadelphia Ledger.

It is the one thoroughfare in New York which by common consent has been reserved for the use of polite society. Commercial vehicles such as trucks are not permitted to invade its classic precincts.

Motorcars of the most costly type rolling up to the doors of the stores deliver stunning-looking women on shopping excursions; members of the smart set who turn up their august noses at the shop girls who attend to their wants. Yet a generation back their own grandfathers were bowing and scraping in shops further downtown before other ladies who arrived in open victorias drawn by pairs of spirited horses, with drivers and footmen.

And those who are the shopkeepers of today as like as not will be the New York fashionables of tomorrow—for the old town does keep on coming uptown.

FRENCH URGED TO GROW FLAX

Increased Acreage Government Har Asked for Will Mean Much to the National Wealth.

French farmers are being urged to increase the acreage of flax on the grounds that it will give additional employment, and that 125,000 more tons of flax could be produced annually, thus retaining at home millions of francs paid to foreign countries to keep French linen mills in operation. In addition, the utilization of the seed for oil and oilcake and the straw for paper would prove an important source of revenue.

In 1908 the French flax acreage was 45,000 acres, in 1913, 72,000 acres, and at the outbreak of the war it had grown to about 115,000 acres. Vice Consul D. B. Levis reports that at the present time the amount of land devoted to flax growing shows a shrinkage of 50 per cent from the highest prewar acreage, while the French linen mills can consume the output of 200,000 acres, their annual requirements being 400,000 metric tons of raw flax. Notwithstanding the difference in price, French flax spinners are said to prefer the home-grown product to that of Russia.

Peculiar but Not Bad.

Shortly after our marriage an out-of-town friend of my husband's was our guest over night.

In the morning he came downstairs smoking his pipe and remarked, "I always take a few puffs before breakfast. Ran out of tobacco last night, so this morning I helped myself to some of yours, Harry, which I found in a jar on that table in the upper hall."

My husband looked puzzled and I nearly fainted as a heavy, pungent odor gradually filled the living room.

"It's a bit strong and has a peculiar flavor, but not bad," our guest continued. "What's the name of the mixture?"

Harry, who smokes only cigarettes, looked at me helplessly, while I found courage to explain. He had filled his pipe with rose leaves which I had recently dried, speared, and perfumed and placed in the jar which he had discovered in the upper hall.—Chicago Tribune.

In No Position to Question.

"For five out of six months my gas bills showed exactly the same number of cubic feet consumption each month," said Charles A. Rockwell, 3134 Ruckle street, recently, "and I inquired of the gas company whether this indicated anything wrong with the meter, or whether it was a remarkable coincidence.

"Verily a soft answer turneth away suspicion for when I received a reply it said:

"While this is a coincidence, it only indicates a well-ordered and regularly conducted household routine."

"When my wife saw that, I was in no position to question the meter reading."—Indianapolis News.

Brought Cab Drivers to Time.

The habit of cab drivers demanding their fares more than the regular rates is not limited to the present day, according to an article in the Mentor. Two hundred years ago in Bath, England, the Newport of those days, cab runners insisted on exorbitant tariffs. Beau Nash, who was the city master of ceremony at that time, advised all visitors to walk home instead of paying the prices demanded. The result was that after some rowdy dirt throwing at fine gentlemen, tariffs were brought down to a reasonable rate.

Muscular Energy in Sugar.

Sugar is the leading "quick fuel" to keep muscular energy going, according to George Mallory, one of the party which climbed Mount Everest to an altitude of 27,000 feet and who came to this country on a lecture tour to raise funds for a new attempt to scale the peak next year. He related how lemon drops, peppermint candies and chocolate were the principal articles of diet of the party that climbed within 200 feet of the summit of the world's highest mountain.

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Shoes. Shoes.

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