WHY

"White Elephant" Signifies Something Unwanted

When you speak of your friend's profitless business, your wife's borrowing relatives, or your own unfortunate investment as "a white elephant," do you know why you do so?

The explanation goes back to an ancient and clever king of Siam who presented a white elephant to courtiers whom he wished to ruin. As the white elephant was sacred, it could not be disposed of in any way, and the expense of keeping it usually proved sufficiently disastrous.

This is one of many of the strange phrases in everyday use whose origins have been traced by a writer for the Golden Book Magazine. Although they are used in their original sense today, their origins are so obscured by the years that the facts are generally unknown. Of the original stories revived by the Golden Book writer is:

"Sub rosa." The rose—with which Cupid bribed Harpocrates to keep secret the amours of Venus—became the emblem of silence during the Middle ages. It was pictured in the ceilings of council rooms, banquet halls, and over confessionals. Hence sub rosa—under the rose.

Why Word "Budget" Has Connection With Taxes

We can only trace the word "budget" back to the Latin "bulga"; but it is believed that this was itself an adaptation of a word from the Celtic language of old Gaul. It meant a "leather bag"; and from it we have the old English "bouge," "a bag," and "budget," "a little bag," which was in slang used to mean something like "a bag of tricks." In 1733 a pamphlet on Sir Robert Walpole's forthcoming excise bill was published entitled "The Budget Opened," the phrase being as equivalent to "the cat out of the bag." Henceforth a chancellor of the exchequer making his statement of proposed taxes was said to "open his budget"; and soon the word "budget" was used without jocular intent of the statement itself.

Why Pollen Needs Crossing

The blossoms of every variety of apple are nearly if not quite infertile with their own pollen. They need to be crossed. This is one of the startling announcements which has far-reaching importance to all those who are growing fruit of any kind, either in the dooryard or in orchard.

Fruit blossoms are sterile because most varieties are hybrid in nature and carry a mixed inheritance because of many forms entering in their makeup. In nature most hybrids are infertile, although they grow wonderfully well.

Bees are not active in transferring pollen from one variety to another except when the weather is very favorable, such as a high temperature and bright sun. But they will work all day in good weather. Bad weather at blossoming time usually results in a light crop of fruit.

Why Oil Tanks Corrode

Not the least of the expenses of the oil industry, particularly in Texas, is the question of rapid corrosion of storage tanks. The corrosion is so great that in some sections of the Texas fields, it is necessary to replace one out of every five tanks each year.

The trouble lies in the high sulphur content of the crude oil, which, in the form of hydrogen sulphid, eats comparatively rapidly into the metal.

Experiments are being conducted with various metals with sulphur resistance, such as aluminum, in order to prevent the enormous waste entailed in the corrosion.

Why Rainbow Is Circular

The rainbow is caused by light from the sun passing into a drop of water, and out again after reflection from the far side. Since the drops are spherical, hence are quite alike no matter how turned, it follows that the angle between the lines from drop to sun and eye must always be the same whether the drop be high up or near the ground. This requires that the rainbow, as viewed by an observer, must appear circular.

Why Term "Dog Watch"

The day on shipboard is divided into seven watches, which enables the crew to keep them alternately—that is, the watch which comes on duty at noon one day has the next afternoon off. This is made possible by the dog watches, which are made by dividing the hours between 4 and 8 p. m, into two watches of two hours each, instead of the customary four.

Why Airplane "Drums"

The rush of air through the struts and wires of an airplane in flight causes the drumming sound. This is about 10 per cent of the noise, the other 90 per cent being made by the engine and propeller.

Why Wetness Affects Color

Cloth appears brighter and deeper in color when wet because the minute droplets of water fill up the spaces between the threads and refract the light.

Why No Century Leases

Under an old English law, land leased for 100 years was considered sold. Hence the longest lease issued today is for 99 years.

Why Unlucky to Spill Salt

The reason it is held unlucky to spill salt is that salt is the symbol of hospitality and friendship.

Widely Used Quotations Too Frequently Garbled

Usually when we think we are quoting some thoughtful expression of the past, we are only misquoting. And the chances are we don't know whom we are misquoting!

The Golden Book Magazine supports the truth of this statement with a list of frequently misused quotations, all part of our everyday speech, some of which have been changed only by a word, but others of which have lost their original meanings entirely.

Today, for instance, we say: "All the world loves a lover." But Emerson said "All mankind loves a lover." We say: "Accidents happen in the best regulated families." What Dickens said was: "Accidents will occur in the best regulated families."

Cervantes in the Sixteenth century gave birth to the modern phrase, "Familiarity breeds contempt." But what he said was: "I find my familiarity with thee has bred contempt."

Adventurer's Heart Won by Beauty of Virginia

The swash buckling chevalier, Capt. John Smith, who landed with his three little ships, Sarah Constant, Discovery and Godspeed, on the shores of Virginia in April, 1607, had a few words of praise for the area when he reported his discovery to his king. Here is what he wrote more than 300 years ago:

"There is but one entrance to this country, and that is at the mouth of a goodly bay, the wideness whereof is near 18 or 20 miles.

"Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation. The mildness of the air, the fertility of the soil, and the situation of the rivers are so propitious to the use of man that no place is more convenient for pleasure, profit and man's sustenance under any latitude or climate.

"So then, here is a place, a nurse for soldiers, a practice for mariners, a trade for merchants, a reward for the good."

Original Speed Law?

The first speed law passed in America was drawn by the board of selectmen of Boston in 1757. The ordinance follows: "Owing to great danger arising oftentimes from coaches, sleighs, chairs and other carriages on the Lord's days, as people are going to or coming from the several churches in this town, being driven with great rapidity, and the public worship being oftentimes much disturbed by such carriages, it is therefore voted and ordered that no coach, sleigh, chair, chaise or other carriage at such times be driven at a greater rate than a foot pace, on penalty to the master of the slave or servant so driving of the sum of ten shillings."

Might Become a Habit

Billy was one of a large family, where the children were accustomed to wait on themselves. Usually he was dressed and was out of the house at an early hour. One morning he was found sitting disconsolately on the edge of his bed making no move to dress.

"Why, Billy,' said his mother, "why don't you get your clothes on? You are old enough to dress yourself now, you know."

"Yes, I can put my clothes on alright," replied Billy on the verge of tears, "but if I commence to dress myself, I'll just have to keep it up, and I ain't goin' to do it."

Salt Superstition

The story which gave rise to the belief that to spill salt is unlucky is this: For some reason salt is thought to be a mystic substance. To spill it places you in the power of evil spirits. Your good angel is posted at your right shoulder, while your bad angel holds forth on the left. When you spill the salt, if you fling a bit in the bad angel's eyes, it blinds him so that he cannot take advantage of your misadventure and saddle you with something unpleasant.

Whipping the Cat

Among the many customs which were observed until quite recent times in England, there was one particularly cruel one, that of whipping a cat to death at Shrovetide. It appears to have been popular in one Midland village especially, that of Albrighton, in Shropshire, for a former inn sign there read: "The finest pastime that is under the sun is whipping the cat at Albrighton!" This was finally taken down as late as in the Nineteenth century.

Exploring the Skies

A test rocket which Doctor Goddard shot into the air, a projectile 9 feet long and 2½ feet in diameter, sheathed in aluminum, flashed up the 60-foot shaft skyward with incredible speed. The performance convinced the scientists who witnessed it that a larger mechanism might successfully explore the unknown air regions above the earth. In this test a camera, a barometer and the mechanism came down to earth by parachute uninjured.

Importation of Slaves

After 1808 the importation of slaves into the United States was prohibited by the Constitution, but the smuggling in of Africans continued up to the time of the Civil war.

MOOSE TO ERECT VILLAGE FOR ORPHANS OF MEMBERS.

A boys' village costing $3,500,000 whose construction will continue over a period of three to four years and which, when completed, will provide for the housing, general comfort and schooling of 500 boys, will come up for discussion among the deliberations of the annual convention of the Moose to be held at Mooseheart early in July. While no definite legislative action on the project can be taken at the convention, as provided by the by-laws of the fraternity, it is expected that plans for financing the project will be presented and considered.

Mooseheart, situated thirty-five miles west of Chicago, is the child city of the Order where about 2,000 orphans or dependent children of deceased members of the fraternity are given a home, a high school education and instruction in a trade. The child city has grown rapidly and the board of governors, headed by U. S. Secretary of Labor James J. Davis, director general of the Moose, has for some time observed the necessity for physical expansion to meet the growth.

As a result, plans for the new village have been prepared. These call for a plot of sixty acres within the 1,023 acre, park-like estate that comprises Mooseheart. About twenty-five new buildings will be erected, according to the present proposal, most of which will be two-story cottages housing units of twenty boys each. Surrounding each cottage will be lawns and in the rear will be a vegetable garden with quarters for a home flock of chickens and perhaps rabbits or similar pets. The buildings will be fireproof, constructed of gray Illinois brick with cast stone trimmings and red tile roofs. Many thousands of dollars will be saved to the Order by having the boys themselves help to build them as part of their training in vocational work. No two buildings will be alike.

The plan, as now on paper, shows the village designed in the form of a rectangle within the enclosure of which are football fields, tennis courts, baseball diamonds and other athletic areas, over a plot of forty acres, available for wholesome play during the boys' free hours.

Eliminating any suggestion of the usual type of institutional dormitory, each of the cottages will contain a large, well lighted basement in which are a workbench, bicycle rack and other conveniences. The first floor will contain an entrance hall, dining room, kitchen, living room, with quiet room for study adjoining and two rooms for the matron and cook in charge.

The second floor will contain five bedrooms for three and four boys each. Each boy will be provided with a clothes closet in his room. Adequate toilet and bath facilities complete the plan for this floor. The attic will be left unfurnished for possible future use.

Mooseheart was founded in 1911 as the materialization of an idea Secretary Davis conceived when he was an iron puddler in the Pennsylvania mills and saw tragedy tear families apart when they were thrust on the questionable graces of public charity. Entire dependent families of the Moose are taken to Mooseheart and kept intact until such time as the individuals, after training in mind and hand in the child city, are able to provide for themselves.

One of the reasons for holding the convention at Mooseheart this year is to give the delegates an opportunity to inspect the child at first hand.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.

David H. Ewing, et ux, to William D. Custard, et ux, tract in State College; $1,400.

May S. Eget, et ux, to Mary S. Vozar, tract in Snow Shoe Twp.; $1.

Mary S. Vozar, et bar, to John Surosis, et ux, tract in Snow Shoe Twp.; $400.

J. Lynn Womer, et ux, to Ruel E. Mohnkern, et al, tract in State College; $1.

John M. Hartswick, et al, to Edmund Heavener, tract in State Collge; $1.

James Ryan to Bridget Deyon, tract in Rush Twp.; $100.

L. L. Smith, treasurer, to R. T. Eisenhuth, tract in Haines Twp.; $14.52.

Miles H. Baumgardner, et ux, to Howard H. Baumgardner, et ux, tract in Union Twp.; $1,050.

Charles E. Dorworth, et al, to Gasper Paulik, tract in Snow Shoe; $20.

Frank C. Blazina, et al, to Monica Blazina, tract in Spring Twp., et al; $1.

Martha G. Greist, et al, to Harry E. McElwain, et al, tract in Unionville; $1.

Annia M. Guisewite, et al, to Earl W. Motz, tract in Haines Twp.; $170.

Jesse B. Jordan, et ux, to George B. Jordan, tract in Harris Twp.; $150.

Lorenzo C. McElwain, et ux, to Harry E. McElwain, tract in Unionville; $1.

Veta Crawford, et bar, to W. A. Homan, tract in State College; $1.

Effie J. Gould to William A. France, tract in Philipsburg; $1.

Effie M. Jacobs to Charles L. Eshleman, tract in Harris Twp.; $480.

C. A. Jonas, et ux, to C. J. Korman, tract in College Twp.; $1.

H. P. Keller, et al, to Lehigh Valley Coal company, tract in Snow Shoe; $1.

Harry M. Swartz, et ux, to Bessie Trox, tract in Howard Twp.; $1.

Sarah E. Bechdel, et al, to Jacob H. Bechdel, tract in Curtin Twp.; $1.

Samuel S. Metz, et al, Exec., to William C. Stempfly, et ux, tract in Philipsburg; $8,500.

Elizabeth E. Richards, et al, to Mary J. Martin, tract in Huston Twp.; $1.

He raced the train! He got across:
And, lest you think I rave
When I assert "'He got across—
It's right here on his grave."