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Rates of Advertising.

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THE HISTORY OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

The introduction of the postal system, as it at present exists in all countries on the globe, has been credited to England, where, in 1840 covers and envelopes were devised to carry letters all over the kingdom at one penny the single rate. The plan was adopted through the exertions of Sir Rowland Hill, who has been aptly termed "the father of postage stamps." It now appears, however, that there is another aspirant for the introduction of the stamp system. In Italy, as far back as 1818, letter sheets were prepared, duly stamped in the left lower corner, which letters were delivered by specially appointed carriers, on the payment of the money which the stamp represented. The early stamp represented a courier on horseback, and was of three values. It was discontinued in 1836. Whether Italy or Great Britain first introduced postage stamps, other countries afterward began to avail themselves of this method for the payment of letters, although they did not move very promptly in the matter.

Great Britain enjoyed the monopoly of stamps for three years, and, though the first stamps were issued in 1840, she had made fewer changes in stamps than any other country. And has suffered no changes at all in the main design—the portrait of Queen Victoria. In other countries, notably in our own, the Sandwich Islands, and the Argentine Republic, the honor of portraying on the stamps is usually distributed among various public officers; but in Great Britain the Queen alone figures on her stamps, and not even the changes that thirty-five years have made to her face are shown on the national and colonial postage stamps.

The next country to follow the example of England was Brazil. In 1842 a series of three stamps was issued, consisting simply of large numerals denoting the value, and all printed in black. Then came the cantons in Switzerland, and Finland, with envelopes which to day are very rare, and soon after them, Bavaria, Belgium, France, Hanover, New South Wales, Tuscany, Austria, British Guiana, Prussia, Saxony, Schleswig, Holstein, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Oldenburg, Trinidad, Wurtemberg, and the United States. Other countries followed in the train, until, at the present moment, there is scarcely any portion of the globe, inhabited by civilized people, which has not postage stamps.

A stranger officiated at one of the churches in Belcherstown on a recent Sabbath, in the absence of the regular clergyman. His afternoon discourse was a new version of the "Prodigal Son," unique and novel. The reverend speaker represented him when leaving home as arrayed in the height of Parisian fashion—"in silk hat, broadcloth coat, kerseymeres, kid gloves, and French calf boots," and after a life of unparalleled extravagance, dissipation and sin, conspicuous among the fruits of which were "the graves of two beautiful maidens," his victims, his property being spent and his servants deserting him, he was seen one morning "out in the middle of a lot, on a rock, his silk hat knocked in, broadcloth out at the elbow, French calf boots out at the toes, kid gloves gone, hogs all around him, and he chewing the pods."

When Jones's board bill was presented, he said that he did not have enough money to pay it, opening his wallet at the same time. His landlady seeing quite a number of bank notes, rather doubted his word, and inquired what denomination those bills were. "Denomination?" said Jones. "Well, I don't know; but I guess they must belong to the Unitarian denomination, for they are all ones."

"James Jenkins," said a schoolmaster to his pupil, "what is an average?" "A thing, sir," answered the scholar, promptly, "that hens lay eggs on." "Why do you say that, you silly boy?" replied the pedagogue. "Because sir," said the youth, "I heard a gentleman say the other day as a hen would lay, on an average, a hundred and twenty eggs a year."

Small boy in a grocer's store—"How do you sell these figs?" "Two for three cents." "Well, let's see; that's one for two cents and one for one cent, ain't it?" "Yes, Well, I'll take the one cent one." "Yes, yes, young man, eat all you want."

It looks bad to see a dog preceding his master down the street and calmly turn into the first saloon he approaches. It shows there is something wrong, something lacking, a deplorable tendency on the part of the dog.

Let's wife wouldn't have looked back, but a woman with a new dress passed her and she wanted to see if the back breadth was ruffled.

ROMANCE OF LONDON BRIDGE.

As the boat shoots under the arches and up the river the bridge comes in view; the busiest place in all busy London. About 8,000 people on foot and 900 vehicles pass every hour in the day. The rumble of the traffic as it comes to us on the boat is like the roll of distant thunder. I can compare it to nothing else, trite as the simile is. In the background you can see the tower, in which the offenders of the government were imprisoned in the barbarous times of old, and Billingsgate, the largest fish market in the world. The dealers and their customers are notorious for the use of bad language, and the word "Billingsgate" is commonly accepted in writing and conversation as meaning abuse or profanity.

The bridge has been rebuilt several times, and the present one cost £10,000,000 in gold; so you may imagine how substantial it is. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth there were stores on each side with arbors and gardens, and at the south end there was a queer wooden house, brought from Holland, which was covered with carving and gilding. In the Middle Ages it was the scene of affrays of all kinds, and it was burned down several times. Three thousand persons perished in one fire alone. The heads of rebels were stuck on the gate houses, among others those of Jack Cade and of Garnet, who was executed in the gunpowder plot to blow up the house of Parliament. The head of good Sir Thomas Moore, brave Wallace of Scotland and the pious Bishop of Rochester were also placed there, and until a comparatively recent date such ghastly trophies glanced down on the passers by. They were fastened on iron spikes, and in a gale of wind they sometimes rolled to the ground or into the water.

Three hundred and fifty years ago the lord mayor of London was Sir William Hewett. Hewett lived in a house on the bridge, and had an infant daughter named Anne. The current of Thames was then very strong as there was a fall of several feet underneath the arches. One day a nurse was playing with baby Anne at a window overlooking the river, and in a careless moment she let her little charge fall. A young apprentice named Osborne plunged into the boiling stream after her, and with great difficulty saved her, thus earning the life-long gratitude of her master, the lord mayor. Anne grew to be a beautiful woman, and as her father was wealthy, many noblemen, including earls and barons, sought her hand. But she loved Osborne the best, and to all other suitors her father said: "No, Osborne won her, and Osborne shall have her." So he did, and he afterwards became the first Duke of Leeds.

The language of laughter is a curious study. It expresses almost every passion, human and inhuman. Some laughs are cutting. Everybody has them just by hearing them. They are the most contagious complaints in the world. Others have no character at all and have been described as "the crackling of thorns under a pot." Never think you have the complete measure of a man till you have heard him laugh. It may betray in an instant what he would not disclose in a thousand words. A hard, dry laugh is a sign of egotism. It detests the streak of iron hidden in the laughter. Every person knows somebody with a spattering laugh, but gentlemen never spatter only individuals. Earnestness and laughter do not belong together. Nature never laughs, though one of the Howitts says of Australian soil, "you tickle it with the hoe, and it laughs with the harvest." But nature is always earnest. She seems to smile but she never laughs. The most contemptible of the whole combination nation is the giggle. You always feel like strangling it, and wish it had been with the unhappy little Princess in the Tower. It is worse than a titter, for it is noisier. It is worse than a sneer. You can kick a sneer, but you cannot kick a giggle any more than you can make footballs of soap-bubbles.

A school boy, being requested to write a composition on the subject of "Pius," produced the following: "Pius are very useful. They have saved the lives of many men, women, and children—in fact, whole families." "How so?" asked the puzzled teacher. "And the boy replied, "Why, by not swallowing them." This matches the story of the other boy, who defined salt as "the stuff that makes potatoes taste bad when you cut put on any."

"Shall I help you to some of the tomatoes?" inquired a young exquisite of a venerable physician, as he sat opposite him at a hotel table. "No, sir, I thank you," replied the learned savant; "but I'll trouble you for some of the potatoes, if you please."

Those who are always peering into the affairs of their neighbors constitute a very mean sort of peagee.

KISSED BY MISTAKE.

BY R. A. W.

"Will you be at home to night, Mary?"

And the speaker, a tall, muscular, well-looking farmer, reddened to the roots of his hair, as though he had committed some very wicked act instead of asking a simple question.

He was bashful, extremely so, was James Brown, at least, in the presence of ladies, and, most of all, in the society of the girl he loved.

How he contrived to approach Mary Williams on the subject of his preference for her, probably remains as much a mystery to himself as it is to others.

James was worth, in a worldly way, more than any of her suitors; good-looking and intelligent enough to satisfy any one but an over-fastidious person.

"Mother is going over to Aunt Eol's to spend the evening, and wants me to go; but I can't. I've been working on father's shirts all day, besides doing the dairy work, and am as tired as I can be; so they will have to do without me. Don't come until eight o'clock; I shall be through putting things to rights then, and will let you in."

Of course James so far forgot his bashfulness as to petition for a goodbye kiss, which was peremptorily refused.

"No, I shan't. Think I didn't see you flitting round Sarah Jones yesterday? I've not forgotten that, sir!"

"Now, Mary—"

But the appeal was broken off by a tantalizing little laugh, and as he sprang forward to take a pleasant revenge on his tormentress, she slipped away, and ran up the path to the house, where he saw her wave her hand as she disappeared within the kitchen porch.

And then he turned from the gate, and took the road homeward.

The tea-things had been carried out, the table set back against the wall, and Mary's workstand drawn up in front of the blazing fire.

Mary was sewing and thinking how she could tell her mother she expected a visitor.

She would have given the world to be able to say, in an off-handed manner, that she expected Mr. Brown to drop in about eight.

"I shall not dare to tell her; she'll be sure to think I wished to get her out of the way, so I might have James sit to myself, and I should never hear the last of it."

And, like a wise little puss, she was silent.

You would not have wondered at our young farmer's enthrallment, if you could have seen Mary Williams as she sat by the fireside that cold November evening.

A neatly-fitting, dark calico, with the new look still on it, a fresh linen collar, and a tasteful black apron.

These were the chief items of Mary's toilet; but she looked as sweet and dainty in her plain dress as if hours had been spent in donning laces and jewels.

Eight o'clock and past.

Mrs. Williams was dozing in her chair—her shadow on the wall bobbed about in grotesque mimicry as she nodded to and fro, and her fat hands lay listlessly in her lap, and her ball of yarn had rolled out upon the hearth, and puss was busy converting it into Gordian knots.

And just then came a double rap at the door—so loud, so sudden, so self-assured, that Mary started up, with a little shriek, and set her foot on the cat's tail, who, in turn, gave voice to her amazement and displeasure.

The combined noise aroused Mrs. Williams, and, starting into an erect posture, she rubbed her eyes, settled her cap border, and exclaimed:

"Bless my soul, Mary! What was that? Somebody at the door? Who can be coming at this time of night?"

"It is not late, mother—only a little after eight. I'll go and see who it is," said Mary, demurely, taking the candle from the table.

"No. You wind up my ball, and sweep up the hearth while I go to the door," said the old lady, whose feet were struggling in the meshes of the unraveled yarn. "Drat that cat!"

And all this time James was standing on one foot in the cold porch, with his hands in his overcoat pockets, wondering if Mary had fallen asleep, and every now and then giving the door a rap by way of variation.

In her hurry, Mrs. Williams forgot to take the candle, and, as she stepped out in the little front entry, the sitting room door slammed after her.

She found herself in the embrace of a stout pair of arms, a whiskered face in close proximity to her own, and, before she could think about the strangeness of her situation, she received a prolonged kiss—a hearty smack—full upon her lips.

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May 16, 1875.

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