OPENING THE BIBLE

When the President Takes the Oath of Office.

NO PLACE FIXED IN ADVANCE.

The Passage of Scripture Upon Which the Chief Executive Presses His Lips Is Entirely a Matter of Chance—The Bible After the Ceremony.

The president before he enters on the execution of his office takes an oath or affirmation that he "will faithfully execute the office of president of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the constitution of the United States," and this oath is usually sealed or confirmed by the kissing of the Bible.

The kissing of the Bible as part of the inaugural ceremony is perhaps following a very ancient custom. The Egyptians were accustomed to kiss the rolls on which the words made of papyrus were written.

The custom requires that immediately after the president elect has taken the oath, with hand on the Bible, the clerk of the United States supreme court shall throw open the book, and the incoming chief magistrate shall implant a kiss on one of its open pages.

Doubting Thomases have always thought that there was no element of chance in this performance and that the passage of Scripture is always carefully selected in advance, and the book is held by the clerk of the court in position so that the incoming chief will kiss the passage that it is intended he shall kiss, but this supposition is entirely wrong.

James D. Maher, clerk of the supreme court, said that the opening of the book is entirely "haphazard" and that no man on earth has the slightest intimation in advance regarding the passage of Scripture that will be thus brought into notice.

Usually the Bible that is used in administering the oath is bought by the clerk of the supreme court and paid for out of his pocket and is a small Oxford edition costing $10 to $15. The late James H. McKinney, for many years clerk of the supreme court, once said, "You see, congress expends money only by appropriation, and if we were to wait for congress to appropriate the price of the book we might never get a Bible on time."

There have been exceptions, however, when the Bible came from other sources. For instance, when James A. Garfield was inaugurated March 4, 1881, he carried in his overcoat pocket to the capitol a well worn, leather bound volume which had been presented to him by his mother. The book was taken from the White House and in a few years found its way to the stall of a bookseller in San Francisco. How it got there has never been known, nor is it likely it ever will be. A few years ago it was offered for sale at a very high price.

Chester A. Arthur took the oath of office just after midnight at his home in New York city Sept. 20, 1881. The Bible used was one belonging to the then chief justice of the state of New York. It is cherished by the judge's family as an heirloom.

On March 4, 1885, when Grover Cleveland was inaugurated president for the first time, he, like Garfield, kissed the Holy Book which was given to him by his mother. It was a small volume, bound in red leather, and was presented to him many years before. The book is now in the possession of Mr. Cleveland's married sister at Toledo, O. The Bible upon which he took the oath in 1893, eight years later when he became president the second time, was one presented by his beautiful wife, and she became its possessor.

When Benjamin Harrison was made president March 4, 1889, the Bible used was one that his wife had given him on the day of their marriage in Oxford, O., where President Harrison spent his school days. The Harrison Bible is owned by Mrs. James R. McKee, the daughter of ex-President Harrison.

President McKinley used a Bible that had been presented to him by the negro bishops of the country. It was the biggest Bible ever seen at the clerk's office, and Clerk McKinney in relating the incident said: "The day before the inauguration one of the bishops called at my office with the Bible. It was a huge affair of the type known as family Bibles. It rested in an ornate box lined with purple velvet and ornamented with gold. The box was fastened by lock and key. When I realized that it would be my lot to carry that huge Bible from the senate chamber clear out to the front of the capitol my knees grew weak and I could not refrain from asking the bishop jokingly where the wheelbarrow was that should go with it."

The invariable custom is that on the day following the inauguration the clerk of the court takes the Bible to the White House and presents it to the first lady of the land as a keepsake.—Exchange.

Re-enforced Concrete.

The ark in which Moses was placed in the bulrushes, we are told in the second chapter of Exodus, was an ark of bulrushes daubed with slime and with pitch. This is probably the first recorded instance of a re-enforced concrete structure.

In matters of conscience first thoughts are best; in matters of prudence last thoughts are best.

Spanish Doubloons.

Should one find a pirate's buried treasure he would have to dispose of his Spanish gold at its bullion value, for since Aug. 1, 1903, when the common crier made proclamation from the steps of the Royal Exchange of London that after that date the doubloon would cease to be legal tender in the West Indies, including British Guiana the doubloon has not been the precious thing it was. In 1730 and for a century after it was worth $8, more or less. It has ceased to be coined in its native country, Spain, and since 1908 it has been unpopular in the West Indies, where for a long time it figured in a mixed circulation, embracing British, United States and Spanish coins. In the interest of romance, however, the name at least must survive. It signifies nothing more than that the coin was double the value of a pistole, but the "doubloon" was never such a mouth filling mockery as "pieces of eight," which suggests great riches, but means only Spanish silver dollars, pieces equivalent to eight reals.—Rochester Post-Express.

A Famous New York Street.

Few of the thousands of people who pass the corner of Nassau and John streets every day know the early history of Nassau street. And just right at that corner is a bronze tablet which gives in concise form the following historical information:

"Nassau Street, Known Originally as 'the Street That Runs by the Pye Woman,' Was Laid Out About 1695 and Was Named In Honor of the House of Nassau, Whose Head at That Time Was William the Third, King of England and Stadholder of the Dutch Republic. Nassau Street Became Identified With the Jewelry Trade More Than Half a Century Ago."

The bronze tablet is on the exterior of the building at the northwest corner of Nassau and John streets. It was erected by the Maiden Lane Historical society in 1916.—New York Sun.

William De Morgan.

In spite of himself William De Morgan became famous. He deliberately violated all the rules made for the guidance of novelists who seek to become popular. None of his novels was addressed to the greater public that is avid for the latest thing of the moment in fiction, but nevertheless they reached that public. He was a law unto himself in the novels that he wrote during his marvelous career that spanned only ten years. It is doubtful if in English literature or in any other can be found a writer whose life and literary career are comparable to his. He was an old man when the world of readers came to know him, and his age was an asset toward celebrity. At seventy he was hailed as eagerly as Kipling was hailed at twenty, and in his way he was no less a prodigy than the younger writer.—Bookman.

The Emerald.

The emerald has been known since early times both in Europe and in certain parts of the orient, where its attractive color and rarity have endowed it with the highest rank and a varied lore. Its name may be traced back to an old Persian word which appeared in Greek as "smaragdos," mentioned by Theophrastus over 300 years before the Christian era, and again in Latin as "smaragdus," seen in the writings of Pliny, who particularized somewhat on its properties and supposed medicinal virtues and was even shrewd enough to suspect its identity with the much more common beryl, although eighteen centuries elapsed before this suspicion was verified by scientific proof.

His Hard Luck.

A small boy whose record for deportment at school had always stood at 100 came home one day recently with his standing reduced to 98.

"What have you been doing, my son?" asked his doting mother.

"Been doing?" replied the young hopeful. "Been doing just as I have been doing all along, only the teacher caught me this time."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Where Is the Profit?

"I understand they sold their house for $8,000 more than they paid for it."

"How lucky!"

"Lucky nothing! After they'd sold it they discovered that they've got to pay $2,000 more than they received for their house for another home to live in."—Detroit Free Press.

Books In Brazil.

In Brazil, as throughout South America, French is almost universally read. Editions of the classics are found in most homes, and bookstores are filled with modern French writers of prose or verse, sometimes in translation and as frequently in the original.

Went Further.

"Didn't I tell you that when you met a man in hard luck you ought to greet him with a smile?" said the wise and good counselor.

"Yes," replied the flinty souled person. "I went even further than that. I gave him the grand laugh."

Best Way of Taking Iron.

When anemic persons have to take iron the best form in which to administer it is spinach, cabbage, green chicory, asparagus, lentils, carrots and peas, all of which contain much iron.

About the Same Thing.

Scribbler—Can you suggest a simile for giving advice? Scrawler—How would pouring water on a duck's back do?—Philadelphia Record.

Let us teach people as much as we can to enjoy, and they will learn for themselves to sympathize.—Stevenson.

A "Sidereal Day."

In answering a correspondent who asked the meaning of the term "sidereal time" the Irish Times explains that that is the only truly scientific manner of recording time and is that which astronomers and navigators use. A "sidereal day" is the precise time taken by the earth in revolving on its axis and is twenty-three hours, fifty-six minutes and four seconds. Our sundials, however, record a very different day.

If you set up a sundial in a garden and observe when it is noon today and again tomorrow you will find that it exceeds the "sidereal day" by three minutes and fifty-six seconds. The difference is due to the distance that the earth has traveled on its orbit while it has been revolving on its axis. The orbit motion makes it necessary for the earth to turn nearly four minutes longer in order to bring any place to the same position with regard to the sun that it had on the previous day.

The Novice's Mistake.

In "Tales of the Flying Service" C. G. Grey tells about a strange entry in the official report of an officer who had recently joined the service and was sent to pass a seaplane through its test for the English navy. He had to go up as a passenger with the constructor's pilot and to keep a log of what occurred during the test.

This is what he put down: "9:05 a. m. left slip; 9:10 a. m. altimeter shows 300 feet above sea; 9:12 a. m. curious phenomenon. Met a seagull flying backward!"

That meant that the machine, flying at the rate of about eighty miles an hour, overtook a seagull—which is not a fast flyer—going at about forty miles an hour, and that up in the air, without any background to give a proper sense of direction, the bird looked as if it were flying toward them tail first. Probably the officer knows better now.

Teach Children Thrift.

We Americans are notoriously the most thriftless of peoples. You have heard how much we throw away. We are too prone to think of thrift as stinginess. We hate to hear about saving. Dorothy Canfield Fisher in her recent book, "Self Reliance," gives parents a strong word of warning. She says:

"There is nothing in the fact of being children which need cut off our sons and daughters from a great deal of accurate information and considerable practical experience with the ins and outs of wise money spending. But there is a great deal in the fact of their being Americans which will shut them off from such information and experience unless parents make a very determined effort to see that they get the proper training, for the whole spirit of our country and age is against us in the effort."

The City of the Dove.

When mighty Amru went to conquer Egypt he camped on the east bank of the Nile opposite Memphis, that great twenty mile long capital of mud bricks whose western verge was the pyramids and whose mud brick houses have all vanished. Amru crushed the Egyptians and came back to get his camp to move over and occupy Memphis. A dove had built in the folds near the top of his tent. Blood bathed Amru, the ruthless, would not let her be disturbed. A new city started about his tents. It grew northward along the Nile. It is today Cairo. Memphis is only a name.

Can You?

Here are a few things that you cannot do:

You cannot jot down the square root of two.

You cannot sneeze or yawn with your head under water.

You cannot state the number of buttons on your clothes.

You cannot draw an envelope by only looking at the paper in a mirror.

You cannot put your left foot and shoulder against a wall and then raise the other foot.

And yet you think you are clever!—London Answers.

That Was Different.

Mrs. Tittle—What a beautiful world it must have been when there were only Adam and Eve in it! There was nobody to say nasty things about them. Mrs. Tattle—But, then, they had nobody to talk about. Mrs. Tittle—Well, I guess, after all, the world has improved since their time.—Exchange.

Ahead of the Times.

"The trouble with my boy Josh is that he's always ahead of the times," remarked Farmer Corntossel.

"What has he done?"

"Went to town to see about a position. He found a strike in progress and joined the strike before he got the job."—Washington Star.

Our Vanishing Forests.

The ax and the saw are insanely busy, chips are flying thick as snowflakes, and every season thousands of acres of priceless forests, with their underbrush, soils, springs, climate, scenery and religion, are vanishing away in clouds of smoke.—John Muir.

Once Bitten, Etc.

"Why did that brilliant woman marry such a stupid man?"

"Because her first husband was a genius."—Boston Transcript.

Preferred Fare.

"What is the favorite fare of Wall street bulls and bears?"

"Supposed to be lamb chops."—Baltimore American.

Nature knows no pause in progress and development and attaches her curse on all inaction.—Goethe.

Joy In Trying

Do not allow yourself to just drift along through life. Set before you an aim, some real purpose. Cultivate hope and ambition to accomplish something. Do not be contented to let things happen; make things happen. Whatever your business or occupation aim to excel in it. Financial gain is not all one gets from labor well performed. Your character is elevated and your mind is enlarged, and the satisfaction in having done well is the most real joy. Don't be afraid to set your aim high. Gild it with your highest ideals. Let the hope of its attainment nerve your every act. Turn incidents and circumstances toward the attainment of your aim. If you have no aim you reach nowhere. A life without a purpose is a dreary thing, without real joy. Suppose you fail to reach the heights you have set as your standard; you will have gone higher than if you had not striven. You will be more useful, of more worth, than if you had not tried.—Milwaukee Journal.

An Expert In Motives.

Cousin Henry is an expert in motives. If you were reading off a list of names and overlooked Henry he would understand. He would know exactly the motive that prompted you to do it. If you don't think to introduce him to the man who is with you he can see through it. He may have to go back four or five years, but he will make a complete case against you. In less than an hour he will know what your motive was. Right now he is angry because his daughter was not selected as valedictorian of her class. You may think that the other girl deserved to be selected, but you don't know all that Henry knows. It is a long story, but he is willing to tell it to you, and after hearing it you will understand the motive—you will understand that it is a case of spite work.—Claude Callan in Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

How David Garrick Made His Fortune.

If David Garrick had had no more than his salary as an actor he would have had little to leave at his death. He made his fortune as joint proprietor, and for a time as sole proprietor, of Drury Lane theater, so that the amount set down to himself as salary was practically nominal. When he retired from the stage in 1776 he sold half his share in the theater for £35,000. He was probably the only actor who consistently made Shakespeare pay, and, like Shakespeare, he was actor, author and proprietor.

It may be recalled that Garrick, who had no enemies outside his own profession, was the grandson of a Frenchman exiled at the revocation of the edict of Nantes and that his father was a captain in the army.—London Standard.

Well Balanced Diet.

One of the most common faults of the diet is the eating of too much protein foods. In excess this is hard for the body to excrete and is likely to decompose in the intestines with the formation of poisonous waste products.

Green vegetables and raw fruit are important elements of the diet. There is little energy in these foods, but they supply mineral salts which the body needs and curious substances called vitamins, which are easily destroyed by cooking.

One food expert has suggested a rule for securing a well balanced diet. It is: An ordinary family should spend about as much for milk, vegetables and fruits as for meats, fish and eggs and as much for milk and eggs as for meat and fish.

Follies of Science.

The history of science has seven problems which men in all ages more or less have tried to solve, but which have finally been given up by all. Today they are called follies.

The usual list comprises the following: First, squaring the circle; second, duplication of the cube; third, trisection of an angle; fourth, perpetual motion; fifth, transmutation of metals; sixth, fixation of mercury; seventh, elixir of life. Some lists put the philosopher's stone for the last three and then add astrology and magic to make the seven.

Too Much For Him.

"I thought he was going to marry that girl?"

"Well, he did think of it. But it seems when he called the other night she threw him down."

"Well, if she's as good as that at wrestling I don't blame him for quitting."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Not That Bill.

"I can't tell a canvasback duck from a barnyard specimen."

"Experts say you can tell by the bill."

"How so? The bill for one is always as high as the bill for the other. That's what I'm kicking about."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Just a Chance In Words.

Young Clerk—Do you like to stand in front of the store and see the crowds go by? Old Merchant—No, but I like to stand in the back of our store and see the crowds come buy.—Exchange.

A Sticker.

Howell—Rowell is a man of tenacity. Powell—Yes. If he were a dog and got a grip on your trousers you would be perfectly safe in ordering a new pair.

Pistols.

Pistols were invented at Pistoja, Italy, and were first used by English cavalrymen in 1544.

Gold, like the sun, which melts wax and hardens clay, expands great souls and contracts bad hearts.—Rivarol.