

ENGLISH HALL MARKS

The True Ones Are the Leopard and the Lion.

LEGACY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The System Invented by the Goldsmiths' Company of London is a Lasting Index to the Age and Genuineness of Old Silver Articles.

Every mark on your old silver means something, and if you care to be sure about its age or make a study of these marks and the system is essential. A record has been kept at Goldsmiths' Hall, London, for five centuries of all annual date letters and of the registered silversmiths and their private marks.

In 1387 King Edward III. granted a charter to the Goldsmiths' guild. During the reign of Edward IV. the Goldsmiths' Company of London, as it came to be known, invented and put into practice an alphabetical system of marks, changing each year. There were similar codes in the provincial assay offices.

This system is one of the few bequests of the middle ages which have stood the test of time practically without change. By the provisions of this system we have not only a lasting index by which to judge the age of gold and silver, but we have a guarantee of genuineness.

Neither the date marks nor maker's marks are hall marks, properly speaking, though all marks on silver are commonly referred to as hall marks. The true hall marks are the leopard and the lion. The leopard's head was used first from 1390, and in 1545 a lion passant was added. These marks were punched into the metal with a die, the animal appearing in a shield or oblong field.

Until 1550 a small crown appeared over the lion; from 1557 to 1680 the puncheon followed the outline of the lion's body; after that the lion appeared on an oblong shield. These various forms of the hall mark indicate certain broad periods and are sometimes helpful in determining the age of a piece of silver when the date mark is indistinct. The date letter or year mark system seems to have been definitely settled about 1518, for, although there was an alphabetical system more than fifty years before, it is customary to go back to 1518 as an accurate starting point.

Charles II. raised the standard of the metal, and in 1685 the new quality was given a new mark, Britannia sitting in an oblong puncheon, with a lion's head erased. The standard was found to be too soft for practical purposes, however, and in 1720 there was a return to the old and present standard of metal, with the leopard's head and the lion passant. Naturally these Britannia pieces are rare.

Makers began to use their private marks about 1393. At first they used the first two letters of the surname. About 1730 the initials were substituted. For example, prior to this date Paul Lamerie's mark was L. Afterward it became P. L.

Thus were four marks on the silver up to 1784—leopard's head, lion, date letter and maker's mark. In 1784 the sovereign's head was added—the governmental customs mark—making five punches in all. There were changes from time to time in the fixed hall marks which are worth noting. For example, the leopard's head was set in a puncheon following its outlines until 1678, when it began to appear in a symmetrical shield of five sides.

In 1639 the head was reduced somewhat in size. In 1720 the leopard lost his head and his shield became oblong, and in 1823 his crown was taken away from him. These were all London marks. There were in addition provincial marks. The Edinburgh hall mark dates from 1457. It was a triple turreted castle or tower. The standard mark was a thistle, which was substituted for the assay master's initials in 1757. The date letter cycles began in Edinburgh in 1681.

Glasgow had a curious emblem—a tree with a bird in the top, a bell hanging from one branch and a fish across the trunk, stamped in an oval puncheon. The Sheffield and Birmingham hall marks were a crown and an anchor respectively, with the lion passant as the standard mark. Dublin had a crowned harp.

Now, to go back to the subject of date marks, I cannot do more than barely indicate what there is in the subject for those who wish to go into it seriously. Different cities or halls had different year marks. I will deal only with the London marks, as being by far the most important.

Each year had assigned to it a letter of the alphabet, which was stamped on every piece of silver made or sold in London that year. When the alphabet was used up they went back to A again, taking usually a slightly different form of letter. These alphabets stopped at the letter U, so that each of these cycles is an even twenty years in length.

One way of counterfeiting old silver is to make a perfect copy of an old piece in some alloy and give it a thick coating of silver by the modern electrolytic process. Such counterfeiters are treated skillfully, hall marks and all being reproduced.

On the bottom or inside of the piece may sometimes be found the granulated or crystallized surfaces left by this process, though these are usually tooled over if in sight. Sometimes English hall marks have been cut from a spoon or other small article of great age and transferred to a larger piece of more modern make.—Country Life in America.

His Idea of Happiness.
At the Players' club in New York some years ago a number of actors were arguing about the meaning of the word "happiness." In the midst of the argument Henry E. Dixey appeared, and one of the contestants said: "Dixey, what is your idea of happiness?"

Mr. Dixey smiled thoughtfully. Then he replied: "My idea of true happiness is to lie on a couch before a bright fire, smoking a large Havana cigar given me by an admirer, while I listen to a woman who worships me reading aloud flattering press notices about my acting."

ARTEMUS WARD'S FUN.

How the Humorist Used to Win Laughs in His Lectures.

However much the audience might laugh, even to a tumult of merriment lasting a minute or two or perhaps longer, Artemus Ward stood with the gravest mien and unmoved face. He could not help laughing while writing or planning a good thing, but no recreation was ever more self-poised when he stood before his audience.

The greatest fun of the whole was the manipulation of the panorama itself. Things would go wrong every now and then, and the audience would fairly scream with laughter, supposing it was a mistake, while as a matter of fact Artemus was always at the bottom of it all.

For instance, the prairie fire would go down at the wrong time and then break out again when the scene it was to illustrate had wholly passed, or the sick looking moon would refuse to stay down in the midst, while the lecturer was apparently almost overcome with vexation and despair. Then the wrong music would be played, and the house would break out into roars of laughter, as when he touched upon one really pathetic recital and the piano ground out "Poor Mary Ann."

In the midst of a really instructive talk on the Mormon question or a truly impressive description of the mountain scenery around Salt Lake he would stop as if a sudden feeling of distress had come over him which must be explained, and, pointing to an absurd animal in the foreground of a picture, he would tell the audience how he had always tried to keep faith with them, but mistakes must sometimes occur.

"I have always spoken of this animal as a buffalo and have always supposed he was a buffalo, but this morning my artist came to me and said, 'Mr. Ward, I can conceal it from you no longer; that is a horse.'" The effect was simply indescribable.

When quiet came again, he would seemingly become wholly lost to everything around him as he described some absorbing and thrilling incident, turning it into ridicule the next minute by the innocent and apparently merely incidental remark, "I did not see this myself, but I had it from a man just as reliable as I am."—Enoch Knight in Putnam's.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

If you must be frank, be frank with yourself.

Every defeat develops a lot of new excuses.

Most men are optimistic as long as things are coming their way.

Pleasing people is like laughing. It has to be done without an effort to be effective.

The most sincere person in the world does not mean it when he says, "I don't care."

Some people get credit for being patient when the fact is they are merely afraid to talk back.

Some people who never recognize a rebuff notice the slightest hint that can be construed as an invitation.

Down at the bottom of their hearts most people believe a little in fortune telling and spiritualism and the mysterious generally.—Atchison Globe.

Mine Preserved Bodies.

A curious story illustrative of the preservative properties of carbonic acid gas, or "choke damp," comes from China. In the province of Nghanwei a party of miners opened an ancient shaft where, according to the official records, a terrible catastrophe had occurred 400 years ago. When the miners entered they came upon the bodies of 170 miners who had perished in the mine, lying where they had been overtaken by the deadly gas four centuries back. The corpses to the eye were as though of yesterday, quite fresh looking and not decayed in any way. The faces were like those of men who had just died. On an attempt being made to move them outside for burial they one and all crumbled away, leaving nothing but a pile of dust and the remnants of the stronger parts of their clothing.

Lalande and Neptune.

The astronomer Lalande narrowly escaped being made famous by a discovery. He accidentally struck Neptune with his glass on May 8, 1785, but supposed it was a star. He put it down in his notebook as a star and recorded its exact situation. Two days later he struck it once more and made a record of it. But when he looked over his notes he found he had it down as being in two different places, and as a star cannot move in forty-eight hours he supposed he had made a mistake in one of his notes. If he had used his mind a little less mechanically, he easily might have been a Columbus.

Postage Stamps.

It is often desired to separate postage stamps that are stuck together without destroying the gum. This can be done by dipping the stamps in water for a few seconds only, shaking off the excess of water and heating with a match as much as possible without burning. The heat expands the water between the stamps and separates them, so that they can be easily pulled apart and are ready for use.

Uncountable.

Tourist (to boy fishing)—How many fish have you caught? Boy—Oh, I couldn't count 'em! Tourist—Why, you haven't caught any, you little vagabond! Boy—That's why I can't count 'em!

A Similarity.

Star Boarder—There's something wrong with the coffee. Boarding Mistress—Yes, it's like you—slow about settling.

How Soldiers Reduce.

The army officer who finds his waist growing greater than his chest, thus destroying the symmetry of his uniform, eats for a little while nothing but lean meat and drinks nothing but hot water. Thus he loses two pounds or so a day. He keeps this diet up till he has sufficiently diminished himself—a matter, as a rule, of but three or four days' abstinence—and then he returns to his usual food again. Many army officers manage by confining themselves to lean meat for three days in the month to keep their figures perfect.—New York Press.

THE HUMAN BRAIN.

It Neither Originates a Word Nor Forms a Notion.

These physiological and surgical facts which show that brain matter has itself no capacity for thought are of such recent discovery that only a relatively small number of persons—mostly specialists—have the least idea that the brain neither originates a word nor forms a notion. Anatomy and physiology alike indicate that the brain is never other than the instrument of what—in the present state of science—must be called the "personality." The personality is as different from, as separate from, the brain as the violinist is separate from his violin. It is not brain which makes man. Man makes one of his brain hemispheres human by his own labor. If a human personality entered a young chimpanzee's brain—where, by the way, it would find all the required cerebral convolutions—that ape could then grow into a true inventor or philosopher, for it is the great man who makes the great brain and not the great brain which makes the great man. This is another way of saying that we can make our own brains—so far as special functions or aptitudes are concerned. Human brain matter does not become human in its powers, indeed, until the personality within takes it in hand to fashion it.

What is the "he himself" which thus takes the mechanism of brain matter in hand and uses it for thought purposes as a telegrapher would use a ticker and a series of wires for the transmission of messages? In the present state of anatomy and of pathology, replies Dr. Thomson, in effect, we have here the greatest mystery connected with the conscious personality. We know that the conscious personality—or whatever one pleases to call it—has a material organ to think with. The conscious personality does the thinking. The material organ is the instrument of thought, and that material organ exists in two symmetrical halves. It is only one-half of this organ, however, which can be used for speech or for recognizing or knowing anything which is either seen or heard or touched—in the sense of the touch which is educated.

All acquired human endowments therefore are acquired by modification of the material comprising the speaking half of the brain. This speaking half of the brain did not originally have a single one of these great functions, nor a single place in it for them, any more than its fellow hemisphere has to the end of its life. They are all stamped, as it were, each in its respective place in the speaking hemisphere, by a single creative agency. All words and all knowledge are put in the brain and arranged there for use, like so many books on their brain shelves by the brain's librarian. Where he goes when he locks this library up and leaves for the night—in sleep—we do not know. But one thing is certain—not one of the books made itself or put itself where it properly is.—Current Literature.

SOME NEW YORK FIRSTS.

Christmas day first became a legal holiday in 1654.

The first law proclaimed in New York related to the Sabbath (1647).

The first surveyor was (1642) Andries Hudde. He received a salary of £80 a year (\$400).

The first official interpreter was George Baxter, appointed in 1642 at a salary of 250 guilders per annum.

The first court of justice was established in 1647, presided over by Judge Van Dinklagen, the first judge in New York.

The first lot of ground sold was to Anthony Von Fees in 1642. It was 30 feet front by 110 feet deep and was sold for \$9.00. It was located where Bridge street now is.

The first public house was built in 1642 at the company's expense. It was a clumsy looking tavern, located at the northeast corner of Pearl street and Coenties slip.—New York Herald.

An Alarm Clock for a Cent.

"I've got the best alarm clock in the business, and Uncle Sam provides it for me," said a West Philadelphia business man of irregular hours yesterday. "Two or three days of each week I have to rise early. My postman always rings our doorbell good and hard when he leaves any mail. He comes along regularly as clockwork at 8 a. m., but does not always leave mail for me, and consequently the doorbell does not always ring. When I want to get up I just buy a post card in the afternoon and mail it to myself. It has never failed to arrive in the early mail, accompanied, of course, by the ringing of the bell by the postman. Talk about a cheap system, I can make the most important kind of an appointment for the morning and fill it by the extra expenditure of a single penny."—Philadelphia Record.

Charles Kingsley.

It has been said that Kingsley's fame as a poet is not so wide as it deserves to be. Whatever truth there may be in this assertion there can be no doubt regarding his right to a place in the front rank of nineteenth century novelists. Kingsley's "Alton Locke," the "Charter" novel, in which he depicted the life of the poorer classes, some what outside his later works, but even these betray indications on every page of having emanated from a master mind. As a preacher Kingsley was simple and earnest, and no less so when he preached at Westminster than when he addressed his village congregation at Eversley.—London Standard.

Washington's Fourth of July Dinner.

The menus run very much the same throughout the books (Washington's accounts), but there is one page which holds the attention in spite of its similarity to the others. It is dated Thursday, July 4, 1776. It shows what Washington had for dinner on the very first Independence day. The account reads: Leg of mutton \$5. 25. Loyn of veal 50. Roasting piece of beef 68. 64. Cabbage, beets and beans 50. 64. Peas 25. Potatoes 25. Blackfish and lobster 50. 81.

Capital Punishment.

"Mamma, did you love to flirt when you were young?" "I am afraid I did, dear." "And were you ever punished for it, mamma?" "Cruelly, dear. I married your father."—Rire.

Correct Diagnosis.

Patient—Shall I have to give up beer, doctor? Doctor—No, I shall forbid it to you. Patient—It's extraordinary, doctor, what confidence I have in you.—Fleigende Blatter.

a Verbal Chiropony.

The pastor, who was calling upon a member of his congregation, asked the name of the sprightly little daughter whose winning ways had attracted his attention.

"We call her Ella," said the little girl's mother.

"That is a good name, Mrs. Donley," remarked the minister. "It has been made classic by Charles Lamb."

"Well, to tell the truth," explained Mrs. Donley, "her name is Cornelia, but it's easier to call her Ella."

"I see," he rejoined. "And she probably likes it better. It is a painless extraction of a Corn."

Barbers Ages Ago.

The first barbers of whom there is any record plied their trade in Greece in the fifth century B. C. In Rome the first barbers operated in the third century B. C. In olden times in England the barber and the physician were identical. Thus a king's barber was also his chief medical adviser. In the time of Henry VIII. of England laws were made concerning barbers, of which the following is an extract: "No person occupying a shaving or barbery in London shall use any surgery, letting of blood or other matter, except the drawing of teeth."

LIVING BY MUSIC.

Advantage of Being Able to Play at Least Two Instruments.

A member of a musical organization who takes special pride in his skill as a tuba player is also an accomplished violinist.

"Every practical musician," he says, "who expects to make his living at the business ought to play at least two instruments—one brass and the other string. It often happens that a man playing two instruments can secure an engagement where he who plays but one would be left unemployed during part of the time. Traveling companies who take their musicians along often insist on their doubling up—that is, playing brass in a street parade or in front of the theater and a string instrument in the orchestra. In the good old summer time the demand is for brass. In the winter strings are in request, so at the change of season many cornet and horn players put away their brass instruments, take up their fiddles and their bows and play at balls and dances all the winter long.

"Besides this, there is another thing to be considered. Every cornet and horn player must look forward to the time when his lip gives out. After years of horn playing the overtaxed muscles of the lips become relaxed. They are strained from the constant demands made upon them by holding them in a certain position. Sometimes a player retains his embouchure for life, sometimes it gives out suddenly, and sometimes there is a gradual deterioration in strength of muscle and he finds himself playing worse than he did before and is compelled to realize the fact that his lip is giving way. The infirmity is a kind of paralysis of the lip, somewhat resembling the scrivener's cramp, which attacks the fingers of the bookkeeper. The lips remain otherwise in good order."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

POLITICAL SPIES.

They Are Quite Common All Over the Continent of Europe.

On the continent of Europe it is quite a common thing for royal personages to be subjected to espionage, mainly, of course, for political reasons.

In France, Spain, Russia, Germany and Austria the practice obtains. At one time during the reign of Napoleon III. a small army of political spies was engaged in watching royal subjects. In fact, the vigilance of the different parties was so great that there were three or four distinct secret services. The emperor had his; the empress had hers; the government and the republicans respectively had theirs—all employed to watch the other parties and their spies.

Moreover, Bismarck had his spy over the emperor. So that France was over-riden by spies, the most important, however, being Bismarck's, to whom the war was indeed to a great extent due.

This secret service agent was a German doctor, whose advice the unfortunate emperor even preferred to that of his own court physicians, and thus Bismarck knew even better than Napoleon the real state of the latter's health, which was, of course, a very important factor in the political situation at those times.—Pearson's Weekly.

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A Great Relief.

"Lady," said Meandering Mike, "do you want any wood chopped?" "No," was the sharp answer. "Nor chores of any kind done?" "No."

"In that case I feel relieved. I kin take a chance on askin' you for somethin' to eat."—Washington Star.

Samuel Ogden was the first English owner of the land on which Ogdensburg, N. Y., is now built.

THE SHORT NOSES.

Something to Be Said in Favor of Those Who Wear Them.

"Physiognomists tell us that the big nosed people do the world's work," said a short nosed man the other day, "and they generally add a lot of rubbish about Napoleon's big nose and how he always selected big nosed men to carry out daring undertakings."

"That Napoleon story was invented by some one with a nose like Cyrano de Bergerac, who wanted an excuse for his proboscis and therefore pretended that his nose was but the introduction to a massive, imposing character. It is true that a big nose is sometimes indicative of firmness and determination, but only when it is associated with a strong jaw and long chin. A big nose with a retiring chin gives to the countenance. Every cartoonist knows this. Whenever you see a cartoon of a society dude it shows a long nose and a small chin.

"But there is something to be said in favor of the short noses. The short nose shows wit, imagination, tact, judgment, discretion. Socrates had a snub nose, and of the lively imaginative writers in almost any language a considerable proportion was short nosed people. Long nosed men may do their share of the world's work, but the short noses write the clever books and the entertaining plays. If Shakespeare had had a nose like the Duke of Wellington, do you ever suppose that he would have written the 'Merry Wives of Windsor?' He might have been a successful theater manager, but would never have become a literary artist.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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