

THE ORIGIN OF BEDS

SLEEPING COUCHES CAN BE TRACED BACK TO 700 B. C.

They Were In Use by the Etruscans and Were Mostly of Stone, Terra Cotta and Marble—Bed Furnishings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

The oldest bed in existence is a bronze of Etruscan manufacture dating from the seventh century B. C. This was found in excavations made at Gordion, in Asia Minor, and from the fact that it is the only one of its age ever unearthed among the many other pieces of furniture found in ancient ruins the conclusion is drawn that beds at this early era were a novelty.

It is sure that previous to this there is no record of the existence of beds which may be taken as authority. Prehistoric man evidently got long quite well without any bed to lie in, and it was not until the life of Etruscans and Greeks began to verge into comparative barbaric luxury that the bed as a component part of the household was universally recognized.

Even then the bed was more kin to the modern couch than the article in which civilized man today takes his repose. According to Greek and Roman wall paintings, bas-reliefs and reproductions in sculpture, the original bed was a bench, often a beautifully carved and decorated bench and one covered with costly draperies, but still in form a bench compared to the beds of today. Many of them were made of terra cotta, some of marble, and then there is the bronze specimen which is still in use.

Etruscan wall paintings of the fifth and sixth centuries B. C. show that these couches were plentiful then. The Etruscans builded well when they came to make beds, for most of the pictures show them as made of stone, terra cotta and marble being favorite materials. In shape they were narrow, set on legs, much like the couch of today, and piled high with cushions. There were two kinds of beds or couches in this period, one for reclining upon at mealtime and the other for sleeping. In some instances the same couch was used for both purposes.

With the early Greeks and Romans the bed played a more prominent part in the life of the people than it does today. Paintings from these times show the bed or couch a prominent factor at all mealtimes and banqueting scenes, the persons participating reclining while they dined or carried on a conversation. Early scenes where the characters concerned are wholly mythological show them meeting death, delivering speeches or reposing idly, all on couches of a nearly similar design. The sleeping couch rarely occurs in this early sculpture or painting.

In form the bed of this era was based on principles much akin to those upon which our beds are now made. There are the body, legs and headpiece, all made much as they are made today. At first, so far as can be found, the body was only a slab of marble laid across two upright stones serving as legs. Later, however, there came to view a leg for each corner and a headpiece. The best examples of modern beds show the skill of the ancients in sculpture and painting and the importance with which they regarded the bed. The legs are often notable examples of the carver's art, and the sides serve as panels whereon the artist of the day depicted the life of the period.

Other Greek couches have legs made of blocks of wood mortised together. Later the entire bed was made of wood. Many of these specimens were of the costliest manufacture, the wood being inlaid with ivory and other articles of ornament. Tortoise shell as a means of decorating couches seems to have been introduced about 100 B. C. Later silver and gold were occasionally used.

In furnishings the ancients pursued about the same system as is in vogue at present. Mattresses, pillows, valances and loose draperies are shown in the early vase paintings. All couches had mattresses, but the thickness, quality and kind varied with the different periods. At first only a few skins thrown over the body of the bed were used.

The pillows were of various shapes, some being long and narrow, others approximately square and still others nearly round in appearance. The Greek or Roman of this period was a most luxurious personage, as he required at least three pillows to enable him to secure a good night's rest. There was one for his head, one for his elbow and one for his feet.

The mattresses and pillows were covered with linen or wool. Leather to some extent was used as a covering for the pillows. Rare instances are found where silk was employed as bed covering.

A great variety of materials was used in stuffing both articles. The commonest article among the Greeks seems to have been refuse wool torn off in carding or fulling cloth. Among the Romans wool especially prepared was the favorite article for this purpose. Straw and rushes were used largely by the poor classes. Feather pillows are first mentioned as being in existence in the fourth century. The draperies and hangings were in many instances rich tapestries.

In the representations of Roman beds the furnishings run generally to luxury and display, and the draperies are the parts given the most attention. The most striking colors to be obtained were used in their manufacture and decoration, and the looms of the east were secured for the best examples of weaving. Purple was a favorite color, and the wealth of a person was often indicated by the excellence of the bed draperies in his house. Bed-making and bed furnishing had

attained to this stage in its year 400 A. D. A painting of a bed of this period shows an article of manufacture and furnishings much like the bed of today. There are four legs, sides of wood and wooden slats or occasionally leather interlacing to furnish rests for the mattress. There are two headpieces, one at each end, suggesting that even at this late date the sleeper was accustomed to have a pillow for his feet. Of the furnishings the mattress and pillows are covered with a striped stuff not unlike many cloths of the present, and a blanket covering the mattress is tucked between it and the bed, much as the neat housewife now tucks in her snowy sheet.

Here, however, the resemblance to the present style of bed ceases. The legs at the head are carved to represent human figures and mythological creations. At the foot a woman with surrounding "picture writing" holds forth. The sides are massive panels carved in a similar manner, and the structure of the whole marks it as an article made to be handed down from one generation to the other.—Chicago Tribune.

SOUTH AMERICAN ANTS.

They Are Perhaps the Greatest Road Builders in the World.

The greatest road builders in the world are a species of red ants found in South America. In building a road they carry minute particles of clay, with which they line all the roads as well as the galleries and passages of their nests till they look as smooth as if cemented by a master mason. Some idea of their number can be formed when it is remembered that the whole of this road to their tree, perhaps nearly half a mile long, is densely thronged with a multitude going out empty and coming back with their umbrella-like burdens, while thousands upon thousands swarm in the doomed tree.

That this vast army is under the best discipline can be proved by watching them for only a few moments. The drivers are constantly running up and down giving their orders to the workers, which they do by touching heads for a moment. The individual so touched will stop, turn back, hurry forward or show in some such way that he is following some command. But a better proof of the discipline is found in the fact that when the army meets with an obstacle, such as a log or a large stone, there is a jam of ants on both sides, and they run about in dismay and disorder. Instantly the drivers hurry up, showing the greatest excitement, and run over, around and under the impediment to find the best way out of the difficulty. When they have decided they lead off the line of march in the proper direction. But until they take this step the workers make no attempt to pass the obstacle.

When a selection of a level piece of ground has been made a perpendicular shaft some eight inches in diameter and six or seven feet deep is formed. This is for drainage and ventilation, never for ingress or egress. If the ground slopes the shaft is horizontal, the mouth, of course, being at the bottom of the hill. From the perpendicular shaft, commencing at the bottom, radiate galleries, like the spokes of a wheel set at a slight angle. At the end of each series of galleries' spokes a circular gallery is made, forming, as it were, a set of wheels one above the other. In, or rather, above, these circular galleries the nests or dwelling places are constructed. These are oval in shape and about a foot long. The narrow end of the oval is downward and opens into the roof of the gallery, and as the spokes always slope slightly toward the shaft no tropical rains, no matter how heavy, can enter the homes and breeding places of the ants.

Rainless Regions.

The rainless regions of the globe owe their aridity to the fact that they are shut off from the influence of most winds by high mountain chains. The chief of these are upper Egypt, the Sahara, the desert of Gobi and the coast of Peru. The driest place in the world is probably that part of Egypt between the two lower falls of the Nile. Rain has never been known to fall there, and the inhabitants do not believe travelers who tell them that water can fall from the sky. The great trade winds at the starting points of their paths are the cause of drought and barrenness, but where they cross land at the termination of their course they give out bounteous rain supplies. The contrasts thus offered are very striking. Thus some parts of the Moroccan Sahara near the head of the northeastern Atlantic trade wind do not experience a shower for perhaps twenty years at a time, while the same wind when it reaches the coast of South America produces a rainfall representing a depth of twenty feet of water in a year.

Rats as an Article of Diet.

Rats have never found favor as a delicacy for the table in Europe or in this country, but in many lands they are relished as an article of diet. The negro slaves of Jamaica used to regard them as a dainty, their masters not providing them with any other meat. Their method of cooking the toothsome rodents was to impale each one on a long wooden skewer after cleaning the animal and cutting off the tail, turning it briskly around over a fire until the hair was all burned off. Then it was scraped until free from fur, and finally the end of the skewer was stuck into the ground, inclined toward the fire, until it was toasted dry, and crisp, thus being made ready for the meal. Rats may commonly be seen for sale in the markets of any Chinese town, split and pressed under a heavy weight, so as to look somewhat like dried fish. In this shape the pigtailed oriental buys them, soaks them in water and then boils, roasts or fries them.

WOMEN MUST KNEEL TO MEN

is the Law Among Many Tribes of East Central Africa.

Men in Africa, and especially in east central Africa, believe that their women are their inferiors, and many centuries ago, says the Chicago Tribune, they made a law that has worn itself into a custom that women must acknowledge this by always kneeling when they meet a man.

Duff Macdonald, who spent many years as a missionary in that country, says that African women hold a most degraded position and are looked upon pretty generally as beasts of burden capable of doing all the hard work. When a woman meets any man, be it her husband or a stranger, at home or on the road she is expected to "taddi-wala"—that is, to kneel and clap her hands to the lord of creation as he passes. Although a woman may have slaves of her own, she observes this custom whenever she meets them on the highway.

Macdonald adds: "Whenever we saw a woman go out of her way with the intention of kneeling before us, though she carried a hundredweight on her head, knowing that she would have to get up with it, we shouted, 'You are losing your way; this is the path,' and she took it, glad that she might dispense with this custom."

Certain it is that if the African woman kneels before a stranger or slave she prostrates herself most humbly before her husband, her lord and master. He is her father, and she is his child; he commands, and she obeys; he may inflict punishment, and she accepts it. The title of "father" is given to all old people. A man of thirty will say, "I am only a child; ask the old man."

The woman must submit, of course. She is her husband's chattel; he has bought her for two skins of bucks, and this is a fair price for one wife. He often gets them in payment for debts. If a girl is not a first wife she counts for little, as these Africans usually have one chief wife and three or four minor wives. A man who is married a few years is expected to have junior wives. The chief wife has the superintendence of the others and looks after the household. The punishment she inflicts for laziness is to banish the junior wife from her meals until hunger brings her to her senses. If a junior wife is obstreperous she is put in a slave stock.

The authority of a chief wife is not a matter to jest with. If a junior wife gets unruly the whipping post is made use of. This does not annoy her lord, for African men have little sentiment for their wives and feel none for their junior wives. They are his chattels, having the same value as his cattle, perhaps less. When a man is pressed for money he usually sells his wife and not his cattle. He expects them to cultivate the soil and cut down the trees, and when he finds time or has the inclination he helps them.

Why Metals Rust.

Gold does not tarnish like other metal because it is not acted upon by oxygen or water. It is the moisture in the atmosphere which causes other metals to tarnish, owing to their oxidation. Water contains a large proportion of oxygen, and it is the oxygen, of course, in the moist air combining with the surface of the metals that covers them with tarnish. Platinum, like gold, resists the influence of oxygen and moisture, and when pure neither rusts nor tarnishes. Aluminum also does not rust, neither hot nor cold water having any action upon it. The sulphurated hydrogen of the atmosphere, which so readily tarnishes silver, has no effect upon aluminum, which under ordinary circumstances preserves its appearance as perfectly as gold does. Silver tarnishes on exposure to the air, the agent producing this effect being the sulphur. Iron is the metal which tarnishes and rusts most easily, its oxidation proceeding until the metal is completely eaten or burnt away with the rust.

How to Spoil Umbrellas.

In most cases umbrellas are not fairly worn out; they are ruined through carelessness of their owners," said an umbrella and cane man. "When I see a man walking with an umbrella tightly grasped in his hot hand I smile to myself, because I know that very soon that man will be wanting a new umbrella. There is no surer way of making an umbrella wear out quickly than this habit of carrying it about by its middle. Again, after being out in the rain you should turn your umbrella upside down and let the water drain off as it stands with the handle downward. By doing this you prevent the water from getting in at the framework and thereby protect the ribs from rusting. Some men open their umbrellas before they stand them up to dry, but this is a bad plan, because the umbrella may stretch when it is wet. Another thing, too—never roll your umbrella up, as to do so cuts the silk."—Detroit Tribune.

Antiquity of Sugar.

The first mention of sugar seems to have been made by Pliny more than 1,800 years ago, who traces it to Arabia and gives the preference to Indian sugar, which he speaks of as "honey found in canes." Statius in his description of the Saturnalia says that among the food which the Emperor Domitian made the people at those noisy festivals scramble for was a sweet substance obtained from Arabian canes. Other classical writers of about the same period describe it also as a kind of honey found in canes and not made by bees. Strabo adds that in a solid state it resembles salt. The sugar cane was introduced into Sicily in 1148 and soon afterward into Spain. Thence sixty years later it was taken to the West Indies, and at the end of the eighteenth century Jamaica alone produced quite 15,000 tons a year.

A Pillory.

Johnny—Faw, what's a pillory? Father—That's a term that some people apply humorously to a drug store, my boy.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A PARADISE OF PALMS

THE GROVES OF BORDIGHERA, "THE JERICHO OF ITALY."

A Pretty Italian Village Which Has the Privilege of Supplying Palms to the Vatican—The Story of How the Concession Was Granted.

More than 300 years ago an immense crowd gathered before St. Peter's, in Rome, to witness the raising of an Egyptian obelisk. The work involved many risks, and the preparations for its accomplishment were surrounded with much impressive ceremony. It is said that Domenico Fontana, the engineer in charge of the raising, became at the very last hour so apprehensive of failure that he appealed to Pope Sixtus V., begging him to command the vast number of spectators to keep absolute silence, lest some chance noise should confuse the workmen. He himself arranged to communicate his orders by an elaborate system of flags and signals.

At last the critical moment arrived. The pope, after celebrating a solemn mass and blessing the 800 workmen, took his place on a balcony overlooking the scene. The great square was filled with the multitude of people, who followed the proceedings with breathless interest. Unbroken silence, however, reigned, for the pope, in response to Fontana's appeal, had issued a stern edict decreeing death to any one who uttered a sound.

All went well until near the end of the work, when suddenly, as the obelisk stood almost upright, the ropes which supported the enormous weight stretched, and the great shaft wavered. Instantly from the midst of the throng of people a voice was raised in disregard of the death penalty and a ringing cry, "Wet the ropes!" was heard. This practical advice being followed at once, the ropes soon shrank until taut again, and the obelisk, saved from imminent danger of falling, was safely drawn into position.

Search was made for the author of the cry, who proved to be a sailor named Bresca, from the neighborhood of Bordighera, on the Mediterranean shore. His knowledge of ropes had suggested to him the remedy at the crisis, and, carried away by the excitement of the moment, he had forgotten the threatening command for silence. Abashed and trembling at his temerity, the offender was led before Pope Sixtus. Great was his amazement and relief, however, to be met with words of forgiveness and praise. Instead of imposing the dreaded punishment the pope bade him ask some special favor, which should be bestowed upon him in token of gratitude.

Mindful of the resources of his native coast, the sailor asked that for all future time the right should be given to him and his family to supply palms to the chapter of St. Peter's for Palm Sunday. Assured by the pope that this privilege should be granted, Bresca returned to his home again, rejoicing in the benefit which his impetuous words were to bring to Bordighera through years to come.

Such is the origin of Bordighera's palm industry, according to the tales which are gleaned from old histories. The different reports vary somewhat as to facts, yet the story in all its essential details is constantly quoted in Bordighera, and the village still claims its annual privilege of supplying the Vatican with palms on Palm Sunday.

Bordighera is situated on the coast of the Riviera towns, which lie within shallow bays, it occupies a prominent and exposed position. The Cape of Saints Ampelio, on which the town stands, stretches far out into the water, and the views obtainable from many portions of the headland are of unsurpassed beauty.

The most distinctive feature of Bordighera, however, is its wonderful growth of date palms, and the village is well called "the Jericho of Italy." It is said there are more palms in and around Bordighera than in the whole of the Holy Land. In whatever direction one turns for a view the feathery palm trees are interwoven with the landscape. Their rich deep green stands out in relief from the silvery background of the olive orchards, and, although the orange and lemon groves are numerous, the waving palm branches rise above them all.

It is said that the first palms were introduced in Bordighera by Dominican friars many centuries ago, but the cultivation on an extensive scale dates from the grant to the Bresca family.

The palm leaves which are to be used in religious ceremonies are bleached until they become yellowish white. The branches are drawn closely together at the top and firmly wound about with rope. In this way the inner leaves, deprived of light and air, are unable to attain their natural green color. Unfortunately this curious swathing of the branches robs the tree temporarily of much of its beauty.

The leaves which must be ready for the next Palm Sunday begin this bleaching process in the summer, while the much smaller number prepared for the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacle, in the fall, are shut off from the light in the spring. The care of the palms at these two seasons and their final gathering and packing for transportation furnish employment to many of the peasants. Immense quantities of branches are dispatched to Rome and to other parts of the country as well and are used in the celebration of the Sunday before Easter at the impressive ceremony of the blessing of the palms.—New York Tribune.

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AMONG THE ESKIMOS.

Manslaughter Is Not Uncommon, and Polygamy Is Rare.

Manslaughter is by no means uncommon among the Eskimo heathen natives, according to Professor Eriksen, but invariably leads to a kind of vendetta between the relatives of the murderer and those of the murdered person. Again, if a young married man or his wife dies the surviving party has the right to kill the small children should he or she not be in a position to guarantee their maintenance. Aged persons, on the other hand, are willingly supported by their relatives. Children are never beaten or punished, no matter how badly they behave. The Eskimos explain this custom by saying that the children have no power of understanding and therefore have no idea of wrong and punishment.

Polygamy is unusual, as there is a scarcity of Eskimo women. In spite of this, however, the professor met several men who had two wives. The exchange of wives is very frequent. Wives must obey their husbands; otherwise they are beaten. Husbands maintain that their wives must be beaten several times annually to prevent their desire for supremacy in the household from becoming too persistent.

OLIVE OIL.

The Method by Which It Is Made on Tuscan Farms.

The olives, stones and all, are first crushed in a stone mill run by ox power. The mass of pulp is then transferred in flat wicker baskets to the "torchio," or oaken press, from which the oil oozes into a vat below. The olives are very old, elaborately carved with the arms and devices of some early padrone. Tremendous pressure is applied through a primitive capstan arrangement which the men work by heavy wooden levers, walking round and round on the stone floor in a track much worn by the tread of laboring generations. There are commonly two or three squeezings of the pulp, the product of the first being of the finest quality. But the process, once begun, must be carried forward continuously lest the oil should spoil in the making. It is finally drawn off into huge earthen jars of immemorial pattern, like those in which the Forty Thieves of the Arabian tale concealed themselves for nefarious purposes. And it stands thus for a week in the adjoining clearing room, called the "chiaratoia," after which it is ready for the market.—From "Life in a Tuscan Farm," by T. R. Sullivan, in Scribner's.

CANARY BIRDS.

The Finest of Them Are Raised in the Harz Mountains.

The chief breeding ground for canaries was formerly the Harz mountains, but of late years only the finest singers are reared in that district. The trade was transferred to Eichsfelde, in the province of Hanover, where poor weavers breed the cheaper sort. The most important market for these gold-en birds is the United States, which takes quite 100,000 birds a year. Great Britain comes next, with some 50,000, and is followed by Brazil, Chile and the Argentine Republic.

The principal dealers have large factories which can turn out material for 1,000 bird cages daily. The peasants take this away to their homes and there make up the cages. Attendants, who each have charge of 1,000 birds in separate cages, take canaries across the Atlantic and on their return voyage bring back Mexican and Cuban parrots for the European markets.

About 250,000 canaries are bred every year in Germany, and their value, some \$50,000, goes chiefly into the pockets of the peasants.—London Telegraph.

Carlyle on Right and Wrong.

Carlyle maintained that a strain of sentiment about criminals was very prevalent in his day, which tended seriously to obliterate or diminish the real difference between right and wrong. He hated with an intense hatred that whole system of philosophy which denied that there was a deep, essential, fundamental difference between right and wrong and turned the whole matter into a mere calculation of interests. He was accustomed to say that one of the chief merits of Christianity was that it taught that right and wrong were as far apart as heaven and hell and that no greater calamity can befall a nation than a weakening of the righteous hatred of evil.

A Stupid Prologue.

It was a performance of "Richard III." and a poor one, to which the two men from Wilson's ranch had listened for nearly an hour with ill concealed impatience. "Come on out, I've had enough of this thing," said one of them at last, but the other hesitated. "That guy in the middle o' the stage was calling for a horse a minute ago," he said in a hoarse whisper. "Let's hold on till the show begins anyway."

A Gratified Curiosity.

"I want you to take back that parrot. He uses dreadful language." "But only in Spanish, ma'am; only in Spanish." "Yes, I know." "But how can madam know?" "I studied Spanish to find out what he said."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Ill-Timed Economies.

If men saved to keep out of debt the way they have to get out this would be a world of millionaires.—New York Press.

Avoid multiplicity of business. The man of one thing is the man of success.—Edwards.

VENOMOUS EMOTIONS.

Sentiments Which, It Is Said, Literally Poison Our Blood.

Anger, fear, anxiety, are among the emotions or sentiments which literally poison our blood. It has often been said that evil thoughts are poisonous, the meaning being that they corrupt other people, but the real fact is that they poison our own bodies. By losing control of ourselves and indulging in anger, by yielding to anxiety, fear and unwholesome thoughts, we cause an irritation or disturbance which, according to the latest sayings of scientists, has the effect of producing a poison in the blood that may have serious consequences.

Naturalists declare that the venom of snakes is generated by anger and fear; that it is rapidly collected in a special receptacle and thence discharged at the object of its anger or fear, and it is further explained that the same process takes place in the human body, but that we have no special organ to receive it, and it therefore disperses in the blood, acting against ourselves instead of for our protection. Be that as it may, it is generally conceded that we are literally poisoned by the emotions mentioned and by any sentiment or passion which upsets the smooth working of our minds.—Home Notes.

MOVING ON FRIDAY.

There Seems to Be a Lot of Superstition About It.

"Friday is a kind of holiday in our business," said the professional mover. "There is a big lot of superstition in this matter, and, except in cases of actual necessity, it is hard to get anybody to move on Friday. If a few families that intend to change quarters soon could only be induced to put aside their foolish prejudice against the sixth day of the week they could be set up in their new home with half the trouble and inconvenience they will experience on any other day. I have explained that to many prospective customers, but the chances are that most of them will vote to join the rush rather than tempt bad luck by moving on Friday.

"Most of our movers dislike Friday as much as the customers. Whatever jobs are assigned to them they attend to, of course, but every last man in our employ will be glad if not a single order was booked for Friday. They claim that every smashup they figure in, every accident to the furniture through loss or breakage, occurs on a Friday, so for their own sake they uphold the customers in their fight against Friday."—New York Press.

A Living Example.

A professor of natural history who was delivering a lecture to his class on the rhinoceros noticed that the attention of the students was wandering. "Gentlemen," he said sternly, "if you expect to realize the remarkably hideous nature of this beast you must keep your eyes fixed on me."—Harper's Weekly.

Not Wasted.

Mistress—You ruined that terrapin last night, Ellen. I can't have things wasted so. "Sure, mum, 'twasn't wasted. We ate it in the kitchen."—Life.

A letter or note sent by a friend should never be sealed.

Nature's Great Invention



On de banks ob de Amazon, far away, far away, What Dr. Green gets August Flowers to die day. Ah, picked dose flowers in August in ole Brazil, An' 'aloo' I see a Yankee, ah, loigs to be dar still.

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