

## THE SNARLS OF TIME

POPE GREGORY'S CORRECTION OF THE JULIAN CALENDAR.

At One Time October Was the Year's Shortest Month—It Contained Only Twenty-one Days In 1582—Commotion the Change Made in England.

Did you ever hear of the famous short month of October, which had only twenty-one days? Some three centuries ago in southern Europe men tried to correct an error that had been growing continually for more than a thousand years, and the result was that they called the day after Oct. 4, 1582, Oct. 15 instead of Oct. 5.

We get our ideas and principles regarding the calendar from two sources, Roman and Jewish. Every one knows that the names of the months are Latin, and in the histories we read how the various Roman rulers changed the distribution of days within the month, etc., to suit their pride or political schemes, much as modern politicians hasten or postpone a convention, and brought things into great confusion until Julius Caesar decreed that the coming year should consist of 365 days and every fourth year of 366. The extra day was to be inserted between the 24th and 25th of February. In their way of numbering the days of the month, which seems to us so awkward, the 24th was sexto calendas, or the sixth day before the calends of March. When the extra day was inserted it was called the second sixth, or in Latin, bisexto calendas, whence our bissextile.

From Jewish sources we get other features. The great Jewish festival of the passover was celebrated on the very day of the first full moon after the spring equinox. The early Christians, or many of them, took the same day, but they fell to charges of heresy, to discussion, criticism and even contempt; so it was decreed probably by Constantine the Great in 325 A. D., in connection with the council of Nicea, that the Christian festival Easter should be observed on the Sunday following the passover, and the other movable feasts of the church were made dependent on this. So the element of a fixed day of the week was brought into the calculation.

In this year—325—the vernal equinox fell on March 21, and if Caesar's work in establishing the Julian calendar had only been correct, this event would have happened on this date forever. But nature seems to abhor simple ratios as she was said to abhor a vacuum. Unfortunately for simplicity the year is not exactly 365 days 6 hours, but about 11 minutes 14 seconds less. So the insertion of the extra day in four years was overdoing the correction, as was known even in the dark ages, but after the revival of learning and the establishment of observatories it was commented on in the council of Trent and was very much discussed by mathematicians. And by the middle of the sixteenth century the hundreds of small errors had accumulated to ten days, so the vernal equinox fell not on the 21st, but on the 11th, of March.

This was the condition of things when, in 1572, Pope Gregory XIII. was elected. He realized the glory that it would be to his reign if this confusing matter was settled, and so set a company of mathematicians to work out the problem, not only of rectifying the old errors, but of providing rules to prevent errors in the future. The hardest part of the work was to fix the movable church feasts without doing violence to the traditions. That a good deal could be said about the work is evidenced by the book of 800 pages written by Clavius, one of the company. The result was that in 1582 a pa-

pal bull was issued declaring, among other things, that in 1582 the day following Oct. 4 should be called Oct. 15 and that centuries should not be leap years unless divisible by 400.

Rulers and states that were then Catholic responded to the pope's request for acceptance of the reform. In France the ten days were dropped after Dec. 9, 1582; in Catholic Germany the change was made in 1584, but the Protestant states delayed until Feb. 19 (March 1), 1600. In Switzerland and Poland there was such resistance made that the troops were necessary to suppress it.

The change was long delayed in Protestant England, which would not willingly accept an alleged reform due to a pope that had encouraged the armada. But the need of the uniformity among neighboring states was too great, and in 1751 Lord Chesterfield introduced into parliament a bill for the reform of the calendar. Some details of the law may be quoted from a magazine of September, 1752: "Sept. 14—This day the Gregorian style took place in all Europe, Asia, Africa and America. This day, had not this act passed, would have been the 3d of September, but it was now reckoned the 14th, eleven nominal days being omitted. Every fourth year will be a bissextile, or leap year, until 1800, which will be a common year of 365 days, but 1804 will be a leap year. Easter and the movable feasts thereon depending are to be reckoned according to the new tables prefixed to the act of parliament. All the fixed feast days . . . are to be kept on the same nominal day as heretofore. Payment of rent notes, . . . the attainment of majority or expiration of apprenticeships . . . shall not be accelerated hereby. . . . If servants' wages are usually paid at the quarter days, eleven days' wages may be deducted out of the present quarter and the reckoning for the future go regularly on." Such were some of the minute provisions of the act. It will be readily believed that ignorant people could not understand this, and we are told of mobs marching through the land crying, "Give us back our eleven days!"

Arsenic. Arsenic has been known from very early times as a deadly poison. It is believed to have been the means employed by Nero to remove his enemies, and there is little doubt that it was also known to and employed by Mesalina and Agrippina. During the middle ages it was extensively used as a secret poison, being sold by alchemists and poisoners of Italy under the name of "widow's powders" or "succession powders." Its properties were definitely ascertained and made public by Brandt in 1733. The plant from which arsenic is produced is a native of Persia, Afghanistan and northern India. In all these countries the inhabitants use it as a seasoning for their meat and vegetables, much as red pepper is employed by the natives of Mexico and South American states. The odor is not deemed by them in the least offensive.

Aiming a Revolver. It is a peculiar fact that very few men, even accomplished shots, know how a revolver ought to be handled. Nearly all are taught to handle a revolver as if it were a rifle—that is, by originating the object aimed at and the fore and hind sight into a line. This is all well enough for shooting gallery practice, but should never be followed in the field. When training troops to use the revolver they are taught, in aiming, never to look at the weapon at all, but to keep their eyes on the object to be struck. In quick firing, and specially in shooting from horseback, much better results are obtainable in this way.

A Poser. A Missouri judge tells how he quieted a barber who had a lotion for sale. The barber had just shaved him and before letting him up wanted to sell him the lotion to use on his face when he shaved himself. "Is this what you use on your customers?" asked the judge. "No," replied the barber; "it is so expensive I cannot afford it." "If you can't afford when you get 10 cents for shaving a man," replied the judge, "how do you expect me to afford it when I shave myself for nothing?" The barber was nuptised and gave up the sale.

Not Himself. Mistress (to head gardener, who has been ill)—I'm glad to see you out again, Bates. Bates—Thankee, mum. But I ain't anything like right yet. Why, when the wind blew these 'ere pots over, instead of a-calling' the hunderd gardner to pick 'em up, blessed if I didn't start a-doin' of it myself!—Punch.

For the Land's Sake. The farmer was fertilizing his soil. A lady from the city stopped to gaze at him. "What on earth is that?" she asked. "A new fertilizer, ma'am." "For the land sake!" she cried. "Yes, ma'am," said the farmer.

## HINDOOS AT TABLE.

The Higher Their Caste the More Irksome Become the Rules.

"In India," writes Sidney Low, "religion, with what seems a malign ingenuity, has occupied itself in heaping complications round the two essential functions of eating and marrying. The Hindoo cannot take his food without elaborate precautions against pollution, and the higher his caste is the more burdensome these rules are. There are some inferior castes in the south who are not supposed to approach even within speaking distance of the elect. A regular table has been drawn up of what may be called the degrees of pollution, so that, while some of these low persons can pollute a man of a higher caste only by actually touching him, it is held that blacksmiths, masons, carpenters and leather workers can pollute at a distance of twenty-four feet, toddy drawers at thirty-six feet and cultivators at forty-eight feet, while the pariahs, who eat beef, have a pollution range of no less than twenty-one yards and twelve inches.

"The more sacred a Hindoo is the more he is worried by his code of table etiquette. The very high caste Brahman ought to strip off all his clothes and, if possible, sit on the floor when he consumes his food. He should not eat anything which has been touched by an inferior or a non-Hindoo or drink water out of any vessel similarly defiled. As the scale descends the restrictions relax until at last we get down to the man of no standing whatever, the sweeper, who is so wanting in refinement that he can openly stroke a puppy dog, and finally we reach the outcast who can eat any kind of meat whenever he can get it and will even drink out of a cup which has touched other lips.

"Luckily for the modern Hindoo these burdensome prohibitions and injunctions are subject to certain conventional legal fictions. Sweetmeats, it appears, are not food and may be taken by anybody anywhere. Not long ago the Brahman pundits at Benares decided that soda water is not water within the meaning of the act, so to speak, and that ice does not count."—Chicago News.

## POINTS OF ETIQUETTE.

Finger bowls are not put on the table until after the dessert is removed.

It is the worst possible form for a man to take a woman's arm, by day or night.

When leaving a car a man should precede the woman, so as to assist her if necessary.

In addressing a newly married couple at a wedding reception it is usual to congratulate the groom and to wish the bride great happiness.

It is not looked upon as good form to announce a meal by the ringing of a bell. That custom does very well for a railroad station, but is now seldom used in private houses.

When taking a lady in to dinner or at any indoor entertainment a man offers his left arm, but in the street he must always take the outside, no matter which arm he has to offer.

The expenses incident to a wedding are, with few exceptions, borne by the family of the bride. The groom's expenses, with the exception of flowers and souvenirs for the bridesmaids and ushers, begin with the fee to the clergyman.

Servants in Germany. A girl engaged in America is by no means a girl secured, as regards either domestic service or matrimony. In Germany, on the other hand, the mistress of a prospective cook and the fiancée of a prospective bride may feel reasonably secure when once an understanding has been reached. "Well, I will engage you, Hedwig," says the hausfrau at the close of the interview, and as a pledge of good faith three marks (75 cents) are given and received. By acceptance of this sum, Hedwig binds herself to appear at the time and place agreed upon, and if she fails in fulfillment of the contract, after allowing twenty-four hours to elapse without having returned the money, she renders herself liable to criminal prosecution. Needless to say, breach of contract under such conditions is rare.—Harper's Bazar.

Postage Stamp Tongue. "A number of ailments, some of them extremely dangerous, are comprised under the general head of postage stamp tongue," said a physician. "Postage stamp tongue, in a word, is any disorder contracted from the licking of postage stamps. Three or four persons a week visit me with postage stamp tongues. They have a throat trouble or a skin disease or a pulmonary complaint brought on by the reckless habit of stamp licking."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

A Fatal Fault. "I have here some jokes," "You what?" asked the editor. "I said I have here some jokes." "Oh, you have there some jokes. What kind of jokes are they?" "New, brand new. Never been used before." "Can't use 'em," said the editor. "It takes our readers too long to get used to the new ones. Good day."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Comparative Happiness. If one only wished to be happy this could be easily accomplished, but we wish to be happier than other people, and this is always difficult, for we believe others to be happier than they are.—Montesquieu.

In France there is an idea that if a fisherman counts the fish he has caught he will catch no more during that day. The idle rumor is always busier than any other kind.—Houston Post.

## BETTING SYSTEMS.

Their Opponent Says He Can't Fight Human Nature.

No backer is deterred by the knowledge that the odds offered are mathematically unfair. His faith in the correctness of his judgment is a setoff against the restriction of his winnings. Argument never prevented a man from risking a sovereign on a "good thing." Some twenty years ago I wrote in a journal now defunct an elaborate refutation of the notion that money can be made by systematic gambling. I gave an analysis of every known "system" and proved to the satisfaction of every mathematically trained intellect that systems were absurd. The paper—rather a serious organ—was in consequence bought largely by betting people, and hundreds tested the systems I had exposed. A compositor in the office of the paper actually made some \$350 or \$400 by following one of the systems and gave up his "chance" for the course. He was back long before the season finished.

The only cure for gambling is a persistent run of ill luck, resulting in entire loss of capital. Even then the doctrine of chances suggests that "the turn must come." That is what lures the man with the gambling instinct. Some one must win. Why not I? is his unanswerable objection to all arguments. It is curious, too, how the very arguments employed to prove the futility of betting have a knack of falling when put to the test of one or two experimental trials. I once, by way of an object lesson, laid the mathematical odds against heads turning up five times consecutively. They ran nine times. It is true that I should have won scores of times if my opponent continued tossing, but he was satisfied that my mathematical illustration had failed and argued if it failed once why not twice? I have decided not to publish the very elaborate manuscript I prepared on "The Folly of Systems" so long as human nature remains as it is.—Douglas Blackburn in London Review.

## IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

What Happens When Two or More Peers Want to Speak at Once.

There is no rule against a dozen peers, or the entire peerage for that matter, rising and addressing the lord chancellor at the same time. The lord chancellor has no power to select the peer who shall speak. A lord chancellor's leg may be pulled, we imagine, but his eye can never be caught. For all he can do two peers wishing to address the house and refusing to give way one to the other could stay on their feet until one of them dropped from exhaustion.

This is no exaggeration. Within living memory two peers engaged in an adventure which at first threatened to develop into a tiring down contest after the manner of Goldsmith's dancers. It happened in 1884 on a warm July day and was very entertaining while it lasted.

The two were Earl Granville and Lord Cairns. Both rose simultaneously to speak. The two peers stood facing each other at the table, and each tried to speak, while their partisans kept shouting "Granville!" and "Cairns!" in an aristocratic manner. It must have sounded a little like a cup tie. Lord Selborne sat on the woolsack helpless. The scene might have lasted until either Earl Granville or Lord Cairns had fallen fainting had not Lord Beauchamp earned immortal fame by creating a precedent in the house of lords. He moved, in a tone of anger, that Lord Cairns be heard, and Lord Cork, in a similar tone, moved that Lord Granville be heard.

A vote was taken, and Lord Granville won by a majority of one in a house of fifty-three excited peers. So if the lord chancellor at any time finds himself confronted by two noble but obstinate orators there is a precedent to fall back upon which may be found useful.—London News.

One Nickel For Two Fares. "Women are pretty magnanimous with each other," concluded the man who had thought they were not. "The other day a girl got on the car. She had a \$5 bill. No change. She turned to the woman who sat next to her and said: 'Can you let me have change for this? I am in a hurry. I don't want to be put off.' 'I haven't the change,' replied the woman, 'but here is a nickel.' 'The girl demurred. 'Take it,' insisted the woman. 'It is only just. I have been riding for about a mile and a half and the conductor hasn't collected my fare yet. It is against my principles to force it upon him.'—New York Press.

A Bad Recovery. Scene: Registry office. Bridegroom (to registrar)—The first time I was married was in a church, the second time in a chapel, but I like this way best. It's so plain and simple, and I should come here if ever I got married again— (Catches sight of his bride and sees he has said the wrong thing.) That is, my dear, if ever I have the—er—misfortune to get married again, of course!—London Punch.

The Dust. Rich Aunt—Why do you bring me this dust, Tommy? Tommy—Because I want you to bite it. Rich Aunt—Why do you want me to bite it? Tommy—Because I heard papa say that when you bite the dust we shall get £20,000.—London Tit-Bits.

Reassuring. The Lender—All right, I'll lend you \$5, but don't forget that you owe it to me. The Borrower—My dear fellow, I shall never forget it as long as I live.—Brooklyn Life.

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- Summer gauze vests for ladies and children from 5c up to 25c a piece.
- MEN'S WEAR—Clothing, Shoes, Hats, Caps, Shirts and Underwear will be reduced from 25 to 35 per cent on the dollar.

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