

## OLD ROMAN NAMES.

The Peculiar System That Was in Use by the Nobility.

The noble Romans were peculiar in their system of nomenclature. They had the praenomen, the nomen and the cognomen. The first of these distinguished the individual and was equivalent to our Christian or baptismal name. It was usually indicated by a single letter, as A. for Aulus, or by two letters, as Ap. for Appius, or three, as Ser. for Servius. The nomen was distinctive of the gens or clan and has no corresponding appellative among us. The cognomen was placed last and designated the families, precisely answering to our surname. Sometimes a fourth name was added, the agnomen, in consequence of a renowned action, some conspicuous event of life or feature of character. Scipio, in addition to his regular names, was styled Africanus after his conquest of Carthage. The name Germanicus was assumed by those who distinguished themselves in the wars with the Germans.

In female names the Romans indulged but small variety of appellation, and fancy had little or nothing to do with their invention and bestowal. When there was but one daughter in a family she received the feminine termination of her gentile name, as Tullia, the daughter of Marcus Tullius Cicero, and Octaviae, the sister of Octavianus Caesar, etc., which names were retained even after marriage. When there were two daughters one was called Major and the other Minor, as Cornelia Major and Cornelia Minor. If there were more than two they were distinguished by their number, thus: Prima, Secunda, Tertia, Quarta, etc.

## GREEK COINS.

How the Ancients Tested the Purity of the Metal.

The first coins of gold and silver that have come down to us are now dated as a rule in the time of Croesus, who lived about the middle of the sixth century B. C.

It may readily be imagined that a mere lump of gold, supposed to be of a certain weight, would be subject to skepticism unless it were guaranteed by some recognized authority. So, in order to save reweighing and testing at each transaction, these ingots or coins were stamped with the authoritative mark of a prince or state. So stamped they became the true coins in spite of the fact that, contrary to modern custom, they were not at all regular.

But, in spite of the guarantee that might be afforded by the mark of a state or a prince, we find the Greeks applying certain tests to determine the genuineness of the currency offered to them. Plating was easily detected by jabbing the suspected coin with some sharp instrument. At other times the touchstone was used. One which was known as the "Lydian stone" was supposed to reveal a proportion of foreign metal as small as a barley corn in a stater. Another test, in the case of silver, was to polish the coin and then breathe on it. If the moisture quickly disappeared the metal was pure. Yet another way to detect alloy was to heat the coin or coins on red-hot iron. If the metal was unalloyed it remained bright, if mixed with other substance it turned black or red according as it was more or less impure.—*Oliver S. Tonks in Chautauquan.*

## Daffodil and Asphodel.

Daffodil and asphodel—the latter, according to Homer, covered the meadow haunted by the shades of departed heroes—are etymologically the same. Old time Englishmen confused the two plants, which are quite different, and it was reserved for later generations to restore its true spelling to the true asphodel and restrict daffodil, with its mysterious "d," to the flower now known by that name. Formerly it was "affodille," and the "d" is variously explained as being a childish insertion, like the "t" in Ted, from Edward, or as representing the French "deur d'affrodille" or the English "th' affrodille" (the definite article) or as the final "d" of "and" in such a combination as "fennel and affodil."

## Brothers and Sisters.

It has been proved again and again that a boy without a sister is much to be pitied; that a girl without a brother is to be consoled with. And why? Because the mutual society improves both. The boy teaches the girl to be wider minded, less petty and narrow, more manly physically, and, above all, to understand something of the opposite sex. Again, the boy is a hundredfold nicer for having a sister. He confides his little scrapes to her, and she, with her gentle inborn goodness, helps him and advises him to avoid the pitfall again.—*London Queen.*

## Solitude.

Solitude is a matter of taste. It has been the subject of much discussion. Volumes have been written in praise or condemnation of it. But perhaps the real value of solitude has never been so subtly and so accurately expressed as by the girl who was asked if she liked being alone. "That depends," she answered sweetly, "on whom I am alone with."

## An Easy Creditor.

The stomach listens to no precepts. It begs and clamors. And yet it is not an obdurate creditor. It is dissatisfied with a small payment, if only you give it what you owe, and not as much as you can.—*Seneca.*

## Looking Ahead.

Gerald—Will you marry me? Geraldine—Wait awhile. I don't want to get tired of you just yet.—*New York Press.*

Necessity may render a doubtful act innocent, but it cannot make it praiseworthy.—*Jobert.*

## A WONDER OF JAPAN.

The Famous Castle of the Gold Dolphins at Nishima.

Is the novel castle at Nishima, Japan, the palace which Marco Polo described in his tale of the marvels of far Cathay as covered with gold slabs? At the ends of the ridge of the pyramidal structure are large solid gold dolphins. Beneath the pile is a well which is literally a salted gold mine. It is gold lined and will hold sufficient water to supply 5,000 persons. The dolphins, which were placed on the top several centuries ago, have excited the curiosity of foreign relic hunters, as any one might imagine they would. So many have climbed to the top of the high structure to discover by testing if they are real gold that the dolphins have become seriously disfigured. Strong steel wire bags have been put over them to prevent further vandalism.

Only by good fortune does one of these dolphins still grace the old castle. A number of years ago it was taken down and sent to Vienna for exhibition at the world's fair held there as a rare specimen of ancient Japanese art. The vessel on which it was being returned sank, and it lay at the bottom of the sea for several years in spite of every attempt to raise it. Persistence was rewarded at last, for it was finally recovered and placed again in its old position.

The castle is used by the emperor of Japan as his headquarters during the army and navy reviews. State balls are also held there.—*Chicago Inter Ocean.*

## THE WHALE'S SENSES.

Ability of the Ponderous Animal to Hear Under Water.

It seems perfectly evident that whales must hear when in the water, says the London Field. This inference is confirmed by the comparatively small development of the other sense organs. The eye, for instance, is very small and can be of little use even at the comparatively small depths to which whales are now believed to descend.

Again, the sense of smell, judging by the rudimentary conditions of the olfactory organs, must be in abeyance, and whales have no sense organs comparable to the lateral line system of fishes. Consequently it would seem that when below the surface of the water they must depend chiefly upon the sense of hearing. Probably this sense is so highly developed as to enable the animals in the midst of the vibrations made by the screwlike movements of the tail or flukes to distinguish the sound (or vibrations) made by the impact of the water against the rocks even in a dead calm, and, in the case of piscivorous species, to recognize by the pulse in the water the presence of shoal fish.

Failing in this explanation, it is difficult to imagine how whales can find their way about in the semidarkness and avoid collisions with rocks and rockbound coasts.

## LAUGHTER.

Even If It Be Emotional Insanity, Let Us Have Plenty of It.

Some English scientist has reached the conclusion that laughter is insanity. He regards a fit of laughter as an emotional insanity of short duration. All right, then, give us a little more insanity. There is not laughter enough in the world—at least the right kind of laughter. We will let the Englishmen keep their faces straight if they want to, but it befits the American civilization better to break out into laughter once in awhile. Laughter is good for the facial muscles. It develops the muscles of the neck as well as the face. It makes the corners of the mouth turn upward instead of downward. It gives the wrinkles of the face a pleasing outline, quickens the action of the heart and gives new life to the nerve centers. Yes, we can afford to let the Englishman look wise and idiotic if he wants to. He can stare with fish-eyed bigotry whenever a joke is perpetrated, never allowing a ripple of merriment to disturb the placidity of his countenance. He can do all these things that he wishes to, but let us go on laughing. This kind of insanity mixes very well with sanity and prosaic life. A little burst of emotional insanity breaks nicely the monotony of facts and figures.—*Medical Talk.*

## A Picture of Tennyson.

A writer who once saw Lord Tennyson on the platform of a railway station says of him: "He would have been tall, but his shoulders seemed somewhat bent. His hair was long; so was his beard. He wore an ugly Inverness cape and a large slouch hat. He looked like a bandit in a melodrama, and I thought him some poor actor who had come out in some of the stage properties. He seemed so sad I felt quite sorry for him as I watched him walk up and down the platform."

## Fiction.

Legitimately produced and truly inspired, fiction interprets humanity, informs the understanding and quickens the affections. It reflects ourselves, warns us against social follies, adds rich specimens to our cabinet of characters, dramatizes life for the unimaginative, dangles reprobates if for the unobservant, multiplies experience for the isolated or inactive and cheers age, retirement and invalidism with an available and harmless solace.—*Tuckerman.*

## Little Willie's Surprise.

Mr. and Mrs. Blank recently moved from the city to the suburbs. The first night in their new home their five-year-old son climbed into bed as soon as he was undressed.

"Willie," said his mother, "haven't you forgotten to say your prayers?"

"Why, mamma," he replied, "is God way out here too?"—*Judge.*

## 'THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.'

It Proved the Most Popular Thing Hood Ever Wrote.

During his last illness Tom Hood in an idle moment made an imaginative sketch of his own tombstone. He drew himself reclining at full length on a thick slab of stone, on the edge of which in large capitals he wrote, "He Sang the 'Song of the Shirt.'" This was the only inscription, and, as he himself has said, Tom Hood needs no other.

How much he felt and prided himself upon the song by which he became known and loved by millions is shown by this and the following fact: "If I were embodied these are the arms I should adopt," said he one day, showing a rough vignette to a friend. The sketch contained a very beautiful and pathetic idea. It represented a heart pierced by a needle threaded with silver tears, and beneath was the motto he had inscribed on the imaginary tombstone.

"The Song of the Shirt" appeared in the Christmas number of the fifth volume of Punch. It was unsigned, but every paper in the land quoted it, and it speedily became the talk of the day. Hood himself did not think it very remarkable, but Mrs. Hood had said to him as she folded it for press: "Now, mind, Hood, mark my words, this will tell wonderfully. It is one of the best things you ever did."

Mrs. Hood was right. The song was translated into French, German and Italian. It was printed on cheap cotton handkerchiefs and parodied times without number.

## THE FIRST MONEY.

It Is Credited to the Lydians of Asia Minor.

It is difficult to realize that prior to B. C. 700 there were no true coins, that ingots or buttons of gold and silver were weighed at every mercantile transaction. The Lydians of Asia Minor are credited with having been the first to cast and stamp with an official device small oval gold ingots of definite fixed weight, an invention strangely delayed, but of inestimable importance to industry and commerce. A coin has been described as "a piece of metal of fixed weight, stamped by authority of government and employed as a medium of exchange." Medals, though struck by authority, are only historical records and have no currency value.

The bright, far flashing intellect of Greece saw the import of the Lydian invention and adopted it quickly, and every Greek state, nearly every city, island and colony, established a mint, generally at some one of the great temples, for all early coin types are religious in character. They bear symbols of some god as a pledge of good faith. The offerings, tithes and rents of the worshippers were coined and circulated as money. Temples thus became both mints and banks. Our word "money" is said to have been derived from the Roman shrine of Juno, Moneta, the earliest Latin mint.

The first shape of these early coins was that of an enlarged coffee berry, punched on the rounded side with official letters or shakings, as they are called.

## Earth Curvature and Vision.

One of the "seven wonders of the ancient world" was the Pharos, or light tower at Alexandria. If you have a popular account of that great structure handy, read it carefully and note that you are informed that the tower could be seen at a distance of from 100 to 150 miles. Let us see if this could possibly be true. The curvature of the globe is 6.99 inches to the mile. This being true, we find that an object 100 feet high can only be seen at a fraction over thirteen miles. Figuring on the basis of an earth curvature of even seven inches to the mile, we find that the light tower in question must have been over a mile in height if visible even at a distance of 100 miles.

## Old Workmen.

An Englishman who is a large employer of labor has been investigating the arguments of those who say that a workman under modern conditions becomes at an early age worthless. He has had a record of all accidents that have incapacitated his men for three days and upward. The people engaged in his employment are from fifteen to sixty-five years of age, and he asserts that more accidents occur to men under thirty than to those over fifty. He says, "I would much rather intrust an exceptionally dangerous job to a man over fifty than to one of thirty years of age."

## Drew His Picture.

It is told of Major General Sir William Gatacre of the British army that during the Sudan campaign he was one day going the round of the sentries. Stopping before one he asked him what his orders were. "To keep a sharp lookout for the enemy and also for General Gatacre," was the prompt reply. "Do you know him by sight?" asked the general. "No, sir," answered the man, "but I was told that if I saw an officer fussing and swearing and rushing about that would be General Gatacre."

## Against a Snapp Judgment.

A boy in a Chicago school refused to sew, evidently considering it beneath the dignity of a ten-year-old man. "George Washington sewed," said the principal, taking it for granted that a soldier must, "and do you consider yourself better than George Washington?" "I don't know. Time will tell," said he seriously.—*Popular Education.*

Man never fastened one end of a chain around the neck of his brother that God did not fasten the other end round the neck of the oppressor.—*Lamarine.*

## WOMEN HOTEL CLERKS.

How Those in Europe Impressed a Woman Traveler.

In most European hotels in the smaller places the visitor is met at the desk by a woman instead of the perfunctory clerk so familiar to Americans at home. I think this is because a woman can be more successful in the art of common, everyday robbery. One doesn't like to argue about the prices with a sweet, smiling little lady, who seems to be exerting herself to an extreme degree to secure one's comfort and happiness, but if one happens to be making short stops here and there it is wise to put away suavely for the time being to the extent at least of an occasional mild protestation.

When madame smiles benignly and tells you that the room you have chosen, with everything included, will be 20 francs a day it is well to remember that "everything included" doesn't include everything by any means. There are a hundred and one little "extras," like tea, after dinner coffee, coffee and rolls in your room in the morning and such like luxuries, to say nothing of service, which must be paid for first hand if it is to be enjoyed at all. So at 20 francs madame is probably taking chances against a protest and will be enormously pleased with herself if none is forthcoming. It is the same all up and down the scale of prices, but I suppose those who can afford to go up the scale never care particularly.—*Eleanor Franklin in Leslie's Weekly.*

## SOURCE OF SHELLAC.

The East India Insects That Produce the Resinous Substance.

India is the home of the Coccus lacca, the insects that produce the resinous substance known as shellac. The females puncture the twigs of several different kinds of trees, among them the bo, the fig and the butea, and the twigs become incrustated with a hard, nearly transparent, reddish, resinous substance that serves the double purpose of protecting the eggs and finally furnishing food for the young insects.

The incrustated twigs are broken from the trees before the young insects escape and are thoroughly dried in the sun. These dried twigs are called "stick-lac," and from them shellac and a dye analogous to cochineal are prepared. "Stick-lac" is the resinous excretion secreted from the twigs, coarsely powdered and triturated with water in a mortar, by which nearly all of the coloring matter is removed. To prepare shellac the seed-lac is put into oblong cotton cloth bags and warmed over a charcoal fire. When the resin begins to melt the bags are twisted, and the pure, clear resin is allowed to flow over fire wood planks or the smooth stems of the banyan tree and cool in the thin plates or shells which constitute shellac.

Pure shellac is very valuable. It is much harder than colophony and is easily soluble in alcohol.

## FIGHTING FISH.

Peculiar Animals That Are Found Only in Siamese Waters.

A favorite recreation in Siam is watching the fighting fish, a species of fish found in the waters of no other country. The fish cannot live in unity, and if two are placed in a bowl they will instantly engage in a struggle "to the death."

It is no unusual thing to see in the streets of Siam crowds of natives chattering and gesticulating around a bowl containing a number of these fish, which they bet on in the same way as more civilized people do on race horses. Intense excitement reigns among the natives as they watch the fish fighting within the bowl.

These peculiarly quarrelsome fish are very similar to the common pike in appearance, with the exception that they are not in the possession of gills. Their fins, too, are remarkably sharp, and these they use with terrible effect upon one another. Blood oozes from their sides, and yet they persist in fighting until perhaps only two are left alive, and then the survivors turn on one another until only one is left out of perhaps a dozen placed in the tub.

Although the fighting fish are exceptionally good to eat, the majority of natives esteem them only for their fighting propensities, which affords them amusement and excitement every day.

## London's Last Public Hanging.

The gawson spectacle of a public execution in England is happily a thing of the past. The scaffold used to be erected in the roadway outside the prison, and crowds would assemble to witness the sight, the last time a man was hanged in public being when Michael Barrett suffered the extreme penalty in May, 1888, in Old Bailey, outside Newgate prison, for exploding a cask of gunpowder under the walls of Clerkenwell prison to release the Fenian prisoners Burke and Casey, a mad act that killed several and injured still more.—*London Graphic.*

## Why He Liked It.

"Do you mean to tell me that you have lived in this out of the way place for ten years?"

"That's right, stranger. Just ten years."

"I'm surprised. I can't see what you find here to keep you busy."

"I can't find anything. That's the reason I like it."—*Milwaukee Sentinel.*

## Only In Chemistry.

Tommy—Paw, doesn't precipitation mean the same as settling? Mr. Figg—It does in chemistry, but in business you'll find that most men in settling don't show any precipitation at all.

Every one of us, whatever our speculative opinions, knows better than he practices and recognizes a better law than he obeys.—*Froude.*

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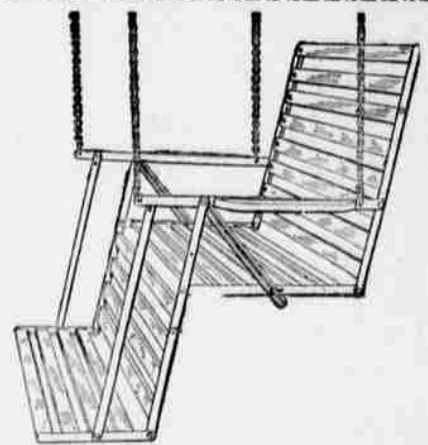
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