ALL ABOUT DIAMONDS

IMPORTATION OF THEM A BAROMETER AS TO BUSINESS PROSPERITY.

Much of the Supply of the United States Comes From Great Britain—The Tremendous Business Done in Precious Stones of All Kinds.

There is an old saying among diamond dealers that by the volume of the importation of precious stones from abroad the condition of business in this country may be correctly gauged. When times are good the demand for diamonds is large; when times are bad, diamonds, being a luxury, are in less demand and the importation of them declines. Just now there is a largely increased demand for diamonds, and if there be merit in the claim made in the saying quoted this should be another indication of pervasive good times. The Treasury bulletin recently issued in Washington corroborates distinctly the claim of enlarged importations of diamonds. Here are the figures for the two years, the two fiscal years, ending July 1, of 1897 and 1898, of diamond importations into the United States; 1897, $1,985,810; 1898, $6,955,789. The increase of importations of diamonds is however, not the only one in the line of "decorative jewelry," so to speak. The importations for the two years of other precious stones, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, pearls, opals, &c., are as follows in amount: 1897, $1,573,788; 1898, $3,440,076.

The two chief foreign ports from which diamonds are sent to this country are Amsterdam and Antwerp. From Great Britain a considerable amount of jewelry is exported to the United States, but much of it comes from England in transit, particularly from Switzerland, a country having few direct trade relations with the United States. In the fiscal year of 1894, following the depression caused by the financial disturbances of that year, the exports of jewelry to the United States fell off one-half in amount. The exportations of French jewelry fell off two-thirds and from Holland four-fifths, but the losses sustained in the amount of the exports have been more than covered this year, as the Treasury figures show. The American port which practically gets all the jewelry, diamonds, and precious stones sent into the United States is New York, the importations into other American ports being insignificant in amount, notwithstanding the fact that a considerable share of the country's jewelry business is done in New England, particularly in the city of Providence. The explanation of the matter is that New York is the market of supply for the whole country in jewelry and precious stones, though New York has only part of the trade in diamond and precious stone setting.

The largest country of export of uncut diamonds to the United States is Holland, and England follows through the development of the diamond interests in Africa. In t... jewelry and precious ... diamonds, France leads ... follows. The variances in t... of business done in diamonds and precious stones (a trade peculiarly susceptible to trade conditions) is shown in the case of Belgium. In 1894 its total exportations to the United States were to the value of $74,000 in diamonds, jewelry, and precious stones. The year before they were $210,000, or three times as much. The year after they were $500,000, or seven times greater.

he same assertion which is made concerning diamonds and precious stones as a trade barometer has been made assiduously for champagne, the importations of which are always largest when business is good and smallest when times are dull.

Origin of the Fork.

It was a Somersetshire squire, one adventure seeking Tom Coryate, who finally delivered England from being altogether spoon-fed, and gave it over to the enlightment of forks. This was when James I was king and when few of his subjects moved out of their own country for pleasure, "the grand tour" being still unknown, and beyond channel an undiscovered land to most true born Britons. At first the conservative British constitution waged fierce war on the heathenish innovation; topical fork attacking songs were sung on the stage, sonorous denunciation was hurled from the pulpit, but the fork had actually come to stay and the better class soon found that, though fingers were made before forks, the latter could prove a most valuable aid-de-camp to the former, and so steel tridents gradually made themselves a necessity in the daintier section of society, though it was not until the merry days of Charles II that they became understanded of the middle classes.

Those Awful Collars.

Medical examiners say that the high collars so much worn by both men and women are productive of dire physical results. The head is thus thrown forward to relieve the back of the neck and this narrows the chest and decreases the lung capacity.

Level of Pure Air in Cities.

Scientists have demonstrated that the purest air in the cities is found about twenty-five feet above the street surface. This goes to prove that the healthiest apartments are those on the third floor.

First Piece of Pure Glass.

The British Museum contains the oldest specimen of pure glass which bears any date. This is a little lion's head, having on it the name of an Egyptian king of the eleventh dynasty.

ANTIQUITY OF DICE.

Have Been Used in Religious Ceremonies From Time Immemorial.

The origin of the dice is buried in romance and mystery. They have been used in religious ceremonies from time immemorial. Dice have been used in all earlier forms of worship to find out the future by divine aid and guidance.

The variety of the world's dice is surprising, but practically may be divided into two kinds. One kind is cubical, represented by our ordinary dice. With two exceptions, Korean and Estruscan, the spots are arranged so that the six and one, five and two, and three and four are opposite, making the sum of opposite sides invariably seven.

This is the dice not only of modern Europe and America, but of classical Greece and Rome, of Syria, Persia, India, China, Japan, Burmah and Siam. The other principal kind of dice is the long square prism, also marked with "dice eyes," found scattered among the prehistoric remains in Europe and existing to-day in India and adjacent countries.

With these dice must also be classed the top of spinning dice, with four or six sides, which are twirled with the fingers. The oldest is from Naucratis, a Greek colony 600 B. C. Only two specimens of dice have been discovered at Babylon. No name for dice has yet been found in the cuneiform writings.

Weight of Bismarck's Brain.

Prince Bismarck's brain, according to the flattering estimate of the anthropologist, Otto Ammon, was probably the heaviest known to anatomical science. Herr Ammon, in consultation with Prof. Schafer, the sculptor, concluded from the measurements taken for Schafer's bust that the brain of the old statesman weighed 1,867 grammes, and consequently exceeded in weight that of any known genius. Cuvier's brain weighed 1,830 grammes. Byron's 1,807, Kant's 1,650, Schiller's 1,630 and Dante's 1,420. The average weight of the brain of an intelligent European is only 1,380 grammes. Herr Ammon's belief cannot be verified, owing to Bismarck's orders.

Costly Cats.

In London and Paris cats are more highly prized than in the United States, and there are frequent sales there of tabbies at $250 each. Some choice cats, with rare "markings" and "points," are disposed of at $500 each.

The famous cat Nicodemus, which won the first prize for beauty at a New York cat show, cost its owner, who purchased it of a street urchin, the sum of 10 cents. After the close of the exhibition the gentleman received a dozen offers of $1,500 for it, and one woman bid $2,100.

A lady who controls a cat farm in California paid $1,000 for a cat in Paris and considered it a bargain.

A Considerate Man.

A Welshman who was in London when extensive sewering operations were in progress lost his watch. He reported the matter to Scotland Yard, and the officials said they would leave no stone unturned to find the missing timekeeper. Shortly afterward Taffy again visited the metropolis, and saw street after street being turned up. He was told in all ...nty-six miles of road were in the same condition. He rushed down to Scotland Yard and exclaimed to the wondering inspector: "I didn't think I was giving you all that trouble. If you don't find the watch by Sunday, I wouldn't break up any more streets."

The Largest Locomotive.

The largest locomotive in the world is the Giant, of French type, on the Mallet compound articulated system, that was constructed by the Belgian State railway administration for the sharp gradients near Liege, having been shown at the Brussels exhibition of last year. This engine, carried by six pairs of wheels, weighs in running order 108,000 kilos, equal to 106 tons, which weight is entirely utilized for adhesion; but the arrangement is such that each pair of wheels only loads the rails with 18,000 kilos, equal to 17¾ tons.

Largest Statue in the World.

The largest statue in the world is Bartholdi's "Liberty Enlightening the World" at the entrance to the New York harbor, presented by France to America in 1885. The cost of the statue was about $40,000; its height, from the base to the top of the torch held high above the head of the goddess, is 151 feet. The statue, standing on a pedestal eighty-eight feet high, is made of repousse copper and is so large that forty persons can be accommodated in the head, while the torch, reached by a spiral staircase, will hold twelve.

Lengthened His Tomb.

Woolrych Perowne, in his book on "Central Asia" gives an interesting description of the tomb of Daniel at Samarcand. The Mohammedans believe that Daniel continued to grow after death, and so year by year they lengthened his tomb till it was sixty feet long, which was apparently regarded as a proportion great enough for even the most holy of saints.

A Primitive Race.

The Papuans of the Malay coast of New Guinea are still in the most primitive state. They are wholly unacquainted with metals, and make their weapons of stone, bones, and wood.

To Prevent Squeaking.

Boring a hole half way through the sole of a shoe is said to prevent its squeaking. The reason assigned is that the air between the layers of leather is released by the boring.

HISTORY OF THE SANDWICH

Derives Its Name From An English Lord of the Eighteenth Century.

The sandwich, which of late years has become so popular, being an almost indispensable adjunct to our luncheons, teas, picnics, etc., originated with Lord Sandwich, an official of high rank in England, who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

His motto: "The smallest portion of time must be put to some use," characterized his whole life, for whether discharging his professional duties or pursuing pleasure, he displayed the same indefatigable zeal and determined perseverance.

He was very fond of cards, and it was told of him that he would become so engrossed with the game that, if his duties permitted, he would sit for twenty-four hours or more, oblivious to everything about him, neglecting often to take his needed food and rest.

If, however, he got very hungry, he would order the waiter to bring him some bread and meat, and to expedite matters, he would place the meat between two slices of buttered bread, and discarding knife and fork, he would take it in his hand and eat it, still intent all the while upon the game.

This odd habit or custom got rumored about, and a new relish was suggested and christened "the Sandwich." The word was formerly written with a capital to designate its derivation.

The Sandwich Islands were named in honor of Lord Sandwich, too.

Silliness of Signs.

The number of people who believe in signs is astonishing, and even well educated men and women have some pet superstitions. Although they don't believe in signs, they think it is unlucky to walk under a ladder just as the painter drops his paint pot. It is unlucky to be struck by lightning on Monday or to be "cut" by a buzz saw on Tuesday. To fall down stairs on Wednesday with the coal hod means disaster, and to be run over by a trolley car on Thursday is painful, but rather lucky for the doctor. To fall into salt water is as unlucky as it is to fall into fresh water on a Friday, for both are equally moist. To marry a girl on Saturday, when she swings a ten-pound dumb bells for exercise, shows that she will be an expert flat iron slinger, and this means trouble for you. To be one of thirteen at a dinner on Sunday when there is enough only for ten means a poor meal. To spill the salt is unfortunate if there is no more of it, and the same applies to sugar, especially at a picnic. The latter will gain you the ill will of all the sweet things who will look sour at your awkwardness. To break a looking glass is a terrible thing if it happens to be a $150 one and belongs to a friend. So the list might be increased, but these examples are sufficient to prove that people believe in signs.

A Traveling Letter.

A curious idea is that of the travelling letter. One such has been en route for more than 50 years and is still on its journey. The class which graduated at Yale in 1844 started such a letter among themselves. Each member of this class, as he received it, was to add to it such personal memoranda of his experience and fortune as seemed likely to interest his classmates. When it came back to him in turn he was to replace his previous contribution to it by a fresh one. So the letter went the rounds year after year, relating to each other of the circle the doings of his comrades. Few are still left alive, but dearer than any other arrival by post is the travelling letter, that still stirs the hearts of the survivors with its memorials of the living and the dead of the class of 1844.

Pocket Filter for Cyclists.

A simple pocket filter, which may save cyclists and travellers from disease germs, is a short rubber tube with a mouthpiece at one end and a wire netting at the other. Inside the netting is a small portion of powdered charcoal in a little net cell. When the charcoal end of the tube is inserted in the water, the germs are not allowed to pass, and the charcoal frees the water from all impurities which may be contained in it. The tube acts as a straw, through which the water is drawn, pure and clear. It is a handy way to drink from a brook.

In taking a ride through the country one cannot be sure of the purity of the water in strange places, and the filter is a safeguard against all possible trouble.

Life Saving Vest.

An English inventor has patented a life saving vest to be worn on sea voyages, which is shaped like an ordinary vest and may be worn as such, inflatable pockets being provided, which are filled with air through a mouthpiece carried in the pocket and attached to a tube connected with the interior of the vest.

Mountain of the Monks.

There is a region in Macedonia known as "The Mountain of the Monks," because there are no fewer than twenty magnificent monasteries scattered in the sheltered recesses, or on the tops of the lofty crags.

Percentage of Deaf Mutes.

Seven out of every 10,000 inhabitants of the United States are deaf and dumb. Of these 55 per cent. are males and 45 per cent. females. The affliction is much less common among colored people than among whites.

Squirrel in Amber.

Flies are not the only thing found in amber. In a big mass of clear amber dredged up out of the Baltic sea there was distinctly visible in its interior a small squirrel-fur, teeth and claws intact.

ETIQUETTE OF THE DESERT

It Is An Insult to Inquire As to the Welfare of an Arab's Wife.

Social etiquette among the Arabs is a factor in life to be considered seriously if you wish to live among them without friction. Its obligations are not to be completely mastered in a few months. Sometimes when I have had companions with me presumably thoroughly au fait with all things Mohammedan, the harmony of the occasion has been seriously endangered by some thoughtlessness or ignorance on their part, which to the Moslem could appear only as a contemptuous want of consideration. Thus, no greater insult could be offered to an Arab than a friendly inquiry as to the welfare of his wife—to us a natural civility, but to him a gross impertinence bitterly resented. On one occasion I nearly made a similar blunder. I was invited by a neighboring shiek to go over to see him, and was on the point of riding up to his tent door and dismounting there. Fortunately, however, I recollected in time that etiquette demanded that I should halt fifty yards off, and call in a loud voice: "Have I your permission to approach?" This gives them time to bundle off any of their womenkind who may be about, preparatory to the admission of a stranger. It is curious also to note that, in spite of the real affection existing between father and son, the sense of respect dominates all other feelings, and the sons will never sit at meal with their father in the presence of a guest, but will wait upon both until the father, rising, allows him the opportunity of breaking bread with the visitor.

Provided, however, that you recognize their social customs, my experience has proved the Bedouin to be genuine, warm-hearted friends; and they really become greatly attached to those whom they know and who know them.

India's Forest Reserve.

Few people have any idea of the immense forest area in British India—a valuable asset, which is now being systematically preserved. At the present time the reserves of the forest cover an area of nearly 75,000 square miles, and they may hereafter be further extended in Madras and Burma, where the work of reservation is as yet incomplete. Outside these reserves are about 56,000 square miles of state forests, some of which will eventually be brought within the reserve area. This means that there are in India, practically for all time, forests which would completely cover the United Kingdom. The mountain slopes of the western Ghauts are still covered with the splendid vegetation of primeval forests of the tropics and include the following trees: Teak, ebony, ironwood, Indian mahogany, sandalwood and the ubiquitous bamboo. In the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, north of the St. Lawrence river, there is one great continuous tract of forest, which extends northward to Hudson and Labrador and which measures altogether about 1,700 miles in length and 1,000 miles in width.

A Rapacious Bird.

A curious transformation in the habits of wild animals is reported from New Zealand, where it is said the kea, or mountain parrot, formerly vegetarian, has in recent years been changed into a rapacious bird of prey. It is unknown in the north island, but in the south island it has become a terrible pest, killing over 20,000 sheep a year. It settles on the back of its victim, and with its powerful beak tears a hole over the kidneys. When it has devoured this tidbit it leaves the sheep to die and attacks another in the same way. So a war of extermination is being waged against this morally degenerate kea.

Arabs Value Water.

No one can travel among the Arabs without being struck by the importance attached to the water supply. Where a rich Englishman would bequeath money to founding a hospital or decorating a church, an Arab can think of no other channel for his charity than the construction of a fountain which will assure him the blessings of all future generations. The Arabs have a curious characteristic in common with horses and other animals. They prefer stagnant water, however bad in smell and appearance, to the most limpid running water, which, they assert, genrally contains disagreeable medicinal properties.

A Wealthy Mendicant.

The wealthiest living professional beggar, Simon Oppasich, was in 1893 sentenced to seven years' hard labor for perjury. He was born without feet or arms, and his physical defects brought him exceptional sympathy and cash. In 1880, at the age of forty-seven he had saved $60,000; and in 1888 he had by speculation increasd his fortune to $125,000 in cash and some $200,000 in Trieste and Parenzo real estate. Since then he has quadrupled his wealth by trading on the bourse.

To Stamp Letters.

Stamps can be quickly affixed to letters by a new machine in which the stamps are wound on a roller in a handled frame, to be forced across a moistened pad and deposited on the envelope, the action being obtained by a depending lever which touches the envelope before the under side of the machine reaches its lowest point.

Carrier Pigeon Servants.

A Doctor in the Highlands of Scotland, whose patients are scattered over wide districts, takes carrier pigeons with him on his rounds and sends his prescriptions by them to the apothecary. He leaves pigeons, too, with distant families, to be let loose when his services are needed.

The MASSACHUSETTS MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE Company, of Springfield, Mass.

Points and Pointers for the Uninsured.

"Good intentions" will not buy the nail-holes in your coffin, much less food and raiment for your widow.

Knowledge and skill rake in the shekels only while the pulse beats.

With pipe duly lighted he lay in his bed; "I'll read and I'll smoke for an hour," he said. He read and he slept, and his pipe—well, you see, they gathered his bones from among the debris.

Justice to the wife includes protection for the widow.

What! drop my life insurance? Not much! A cyclone may lift my house and barn clean off the premises and never budge my mortgage."

"What a tangle my affairs would be in, if that were my funeral!" Is that so? Then insure your life—insure today.

"Death ends all?" Not by any means. Death is often only the first gun in the widow's battle for bread.

Remit premiums to the company, that the company may remit insurance to the widow.

Life insurance is a mere matter of dollars and sense.

The sick room and the cemetery may teach the need of life insurance, but the agent never solicits business there.

That's right, young man; start business on business principles. Insure what you have while you get more. Rent if you must, but insure your furniture. Then don't forget that, usuall, the most valuable piece of furniture about the house is yourself. Are you insured?

Don't lock your door—no thieves in this country. Don't insure your store—no fires ever happen. Don't insure your life—people never die.

Think of bu lding earning $5,000 a year rental and burning down without insurance! Think of a man earning $5,000 a year salary, and dying without insurance!

Life insurance premiums are, or ought to be, as much a part of household expense a barrel of flour. The one will appease the hunger of the present, the other of the future.

In life insurance men must pay for gray hairs. Young man take notie.

Very good—frendly sympathy for the widow. Much better—frendly aid for the widow. Decidedly best—manly insurance for the widow.

"Are you a protectignist, John?"

"Yes, sir: got all the life insurance I can carry."

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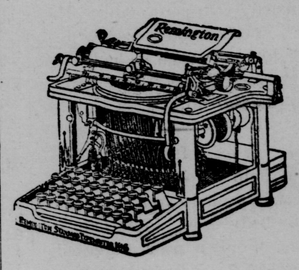
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