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CREDIT DUE TO SOMEBODY.

Where Did We Get the Right to Borrow In Mathematics?

"Where did we get the right to borrow in mathematics?" asked a man who takes an interest in curious things. "We always pay back—a thing we sometimes fail to do in other relationships in life—but where did we get the right to borrow in the first instance? Take a simple illustration in subtraction: The teacher will tell the pupil to subtract 4.322 from 6,421. We put the problem down after this fashion:

6,421
4,322
2,099

Here we have the problem and the result. We know that we cannot say 'two from one.' So we borrow one and say 'two from eleven,' and we get the result 'nine.' We pay back promptly, for instead of saying 'two from two leaves nothing,' we say 'three from twelve leaves nine.' But by what authority do we say this? When did we discover that this method would give us correct mathematical results? That's what I would like to know. Here we have one of the problems which the doctrine of evolution may deal with. I suppose some old fellow in the long ago found that it was necessary to devise a method of meeting this mathematical emergency, so he hit upon the idea of borrowing from one row of figures and paying back to the next, and so met and conquered a very serious difficulty. The idea originated with some one, and to that some one we owe something. Mathematics would be a meaningless science without this convenient plan, just as other things would be useless but for the clever inventions of men who have gone before. There is the thing, for instance, which stands for nothing, the naught, that round symbol 0. It has a history. We know how they calculated before it came into existence. But I will not tell you about it now. I was speaking about the borrowing habit in mathematics, and that is enough to think about at one time. Do you know how and when it originated?"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

KEYS OF THE BASTILLE.

These Historic Relics of Old Paris Owned by an American.

The keys which locked the great gates of the Bastille at the time of its fall have been in America for a number of years. For nearly a century they remained in the possession of the family of the Frenchman who took them from the famous prison, though they have recently come into the possession of an Englishman living in Quebec.

When the mob stormed the prison on July 14, 1789, a Parisian, Carrier Lechastel, is said to have been the first to rush over the drawbridge as it fell. It was he, at any rate, who overtook a fleeing jailer and took the keys from him. The mob immediately stuck the keys on the end of a spike, and an immense throng paraded with them through the streets. They were considered one of the most valuable trophies of the revolution.

Lechastel kept the keys, and they remained in his family until 1859, when a descendant of the family emigrated to America, taking them with him. Eventually the keys were sold to John Hamilton of St. Louis, who kept them for twenty-five years, exhibiting them from time to time, when they were sold to a Canadian.

One of the keys was obtained in France by General Lafayette and was presented by him to George Washington a year or two before his death. It hangs in the mansion at Mount Vernon and has been seen by thousands of visitors there.

The keys at present are very old and rusty. The largest of them is twelve inches long and is quite heavy. The smallest is of fine workmanship, the socket being shaped like the ace of clubs, and is supposed to have belonged to the treasure rooms. This and another key measure six inches in length, while the other two are about ten inches and much heavier.—Washington Times.

Really Antique.

An excellent plaster of paris cast may be seen in one of the Egyptian galleries of the British museum of the famous sycamore statuette known as the "Sheikh-el-Beled," or "Village Sheikh." The original dates from 3900 B. C. and is still in perfect condition, although it is the oldest known specimen of wood carving. It represents an overseer of the workmen engaged in building the pyramids close to Sakkarao, where it was discovered.—London News.

Killing Sharks by Electricity.

In the British navy the engineers have a curious way of killing sharks. They seal up a dynamite cartridge in an empty can and put the can inside a lump of pork. The pork is thrown overboard on a wire which has been connected with an electric battery. When the shark takes the bait, the engineer presses a button, which explodes the cartridge and kills the fish.

Willing to Waive That.

"Miss Angeline," began the poor but proud young man, "if I were in a position to ask you to be my wife"—

"Good gracious, Mr. Throgson!" she exclaimed. "In a position? The idea! Do you think I would want you to get down on your knees?"—Exchange.

When a man is determined to rise in the world, it is better not to interfere with him too much. If his purpose is right, he will be a dangerous wrestler. —Schoolmaster.

The highest shot tower in the world is in Villach, Austria. Bullets from the upper level fall 249 feet.

COURTESY IN THE HOME.

It Is Essential to Happiness In the Family Circle.

There is no place where there is greater need of true, refined, everyday courtesy or where it will be more greatly appreciated than in the home circle. Yet in how many households do we see an entire lack of it.

The husband comes in tired and surly, hurries down his meal, gives the cat a kick and departs without one kind word or gracious act to any one.

The children are noisy and quarrelsome. The mother, tired and nervous, has only sharp, recriminating words for her husband, the children and the servant. The whole atmosphere appears surcharged with the very quintessence of disturbing and disheartening elements.

Let a visitor come in to make a neighborly call, however, and how quickly everything is changed. Both husband and wife welcome him with the sweetest of smiles and courtesy. When the visitor departs, he is bowed out with the most charming grace and in silver tones invited to call again.

This is eminently right and proper, but why should not the same consideration prevail among those who are bound to each other by ties of family relationship—"our own, whom we love best?" Why should not the wife, the child, the servant, whom you meet every day in the most intimate relations—why should they not, I ask, be vouchsafed some courtesy as well as the guest who calls for a brief hour?

"Charity begins at home," we are told, and I think courtesy should too. No one, be he man or woman, can stand weeks and years of continual fault finding or habitual discourtesy.

You bow to your next door neighbor when you meet her in the street and give her a kind or cordial word. Why not be respectful to members of your own family? Try it. You will find you will be happier for it. Your home will become an ideal one, and every one will be influenced to good by the light which will radiate from it.—Pittsburg Press.

THE JIMSON WEED.

Probably a Legacy to Us From South America or Asia.

Once upon a time the name of Jamestown must have been very sharply shortened. Within the memory of many people now living James was pronounced "Jeems;" in fact, we believe that that was the accepted pronunciation of our Virginian forefathers. But "Jim" must have been the diminutive of "Jeems," as well as of James; at least we judge so because what is popularly known as "the jimson weed" really is the Jamestown weed.

Nor is there any reason to suppose that this contraction was made jeeringly or sneeringly. More probably it grew into use "jess so," and we find intelligent Americans to whom it has never occurred that there is any connection whatever between Jamestown and Jimson. All the same, the authorities say that "Jimson" is "short" for the name of the place where the English made their first permanent settlement in what is now the United States and where the Old Dominion's first capital was located.

The jimson weed, however, is not a native plant, but probably came to us from South America or Asia. It is a question how it got to Jamestown, but we believe it is conceded that it is not indigenous to Virginia. If it was deliberately and designedly imported, it must have been because of its medicinal value; certainly not for its odor, which is vile; certainly not for its flowers and leaves, because they do not compare in beauty with those of scores of native plants. And, while this weed is now recognized as having some medicinal value, it may not have had that reputation "then" with Europeans. The Chinese, however, use it to some extent medicinally and may have done so from time immemorial, that country being little given to the acceptance of new ideas or new remedies.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Unchangeable.

"I'd like to exchange this," said a woman who the other day entered a retail bookstore.

The clerk unwrapped the bundle and glanced at its contents.

"I'm sorry, madam," he said, "but we can't do it."

"Why not?" she cried. "You've always exchanged books for me heretofore."

"I know," replied the clerk politely, but firmly, "but we can't change this. It's 'The Leopard's Spots.'"—Philadelphia Press.

Claddagh Wedding Rings.

The Claddagh wedding rings are absolutely different from the ordinary plain gold finger band which a cynic once declared to be "the sign manual of a man's impertinence and a woman's folly." Those used by that picturesque colony, the Claddagh fisher folk, are in the form of two clasped hands holding a heart. It is a quaint, pretty and symbolical design, and, oddly enough, the very old specimens are thought to be the most valuable.

And Then Not Do It.

"Many people are entirely too hasty. A man ought to think two or three minutes before he opens his mouth at all."

"It altogether depends. He ought to think two or three years before he opens his mouth to sing."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Schoolboy Definitions.

These are two schoolboy definitions illustrated by sentences:

"Frantic means wild; I picked some frantic flowers."

"Athletic, strong; the vinegar was too athletic to use."—Little Chronicle.

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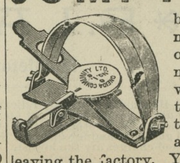
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