

THINGS WORTH KNOWING

COLLECTED AND CONDENSED FROM
MANY RELIABLE SOURCES.

Short Bits of Condensed Information for the Busy Merchant, the Tired Employee, the Eager Student, the Habits of Men and People, and Some Curious Customs.

There are just 3,500 lighthouses in the world.

An infant grows eight inches during the first year.

The piano manufacturers of Germany turn out over 2,000 pianos a week.

Two thousand two hundred trains leave London ordinarily every 24 hours.

The motto of Portugal is—"In hoc signo vinces"—"By this sign shalt thou conquer."

Enslavement or the use of "silos" is increasing, the returns for 1889 showing 2820 in the United Kingdom.

The Chinese and Tibetans have a week of five days, named after iron, wood, water, feathers and earth.

In the month of August, 1843, nearly 75,000 persons in London took the teetotal pledge from Father Mathew.

According to the last census of Calcutta, the capital of India is inhabited by 30,400 Christians of all nationalities.

The underground system of telegraphs of the German empire has a total length of 3,600 miles, and has cost £2,100,000.

The national gallery began with the purchase by government of the Angerstein collection of pictures (38) for £57,000.

China has 136 telegraph stations. The system is mainly controlled by the government, and the operators are all Danes.

The railways of Russia represent a total length of 17,690 miles, of which 5,093 belong to the state, and 12,597 to companies.

The "last heir," in Scotch law, means the sovereign, who takes the property of persons deceased who have no legal heir.

As early as 969, A. D. the Chinese fastened rockets to their arrows, that the latter might be thrown to a greater distance.

Of 600,000 foreigners in the Argentine Republic, there are said to be 280,000 Italians, 150,000 French, 100,000 Spaniards, 40,000 English, and 20,000 Germans.

The world's largest gold mine, for which \$15,000,000 has been refused, is located in Alaska. It is lighted by electricity, and worked day and night.

The cuttlefish, which amongst other strange things always walks with its head downwards, does not chew its food at all, but masticates with its gizzard.

The cochineal insect was one of the earliest articles of commerce brought from Mexico by the Spaniards. It takes 70,000 insects to make one pound of cochineal.

A horse will live 25 days without solid food, merely drinking water; 17 days without either eating or drinking; and only 5 days when eating solid food without drinking.

The largest theatre in the world is the new Opera-house in Paris. It covers nearly three acres of ground, its cubic mass is 4,287,000 feet, and it cost 100,000,000 francs.

The dollar did not originate with the Spanish, but was first coined at Joachimthal, a mining town in Bohemia; and hence called "Joachim's thaler," or simply thaler, or dollar.

The whole of the blood in the body passes through the heart in 32 beats; in a man of 70 years of age, about 675,920 tons of blood will have passed through his heart during his life.

Honey soap does not contain honey, nor is honey in any way employed in making it. It is a mixture of soap, palm-oil, and olive-oil, each one part, with three parts of curd-soap or yellow-soap-scented.

The value of timber consumed yearly in Europe is £190,250,000. In the United States \$27,400,000; and the quantity per inhabitant in Europe 41 cubic feet, and in the United States 58 cubic feet per year.

The Prince of Wales is said to possess a hoof of the charger that bore Nelson to his death at Balaklava. It is surmounted with a small silver statue of the captain carrying the fatal order for the advance of the Light Brigade.

The "knot," or nautical mile, equals 1,152 statute miles. The nautical and geographical mile are the same, being the 160th part of a degree on the earth's circumference. There are in a degree 60' statute miles.

The population of the United Kingdom at the census of 1881 was: England, 24,613,926; Wales, 1,360,513; Ireland, 5,174,586; Scotland, 3,735,573; Isle of Man and Channel Islands, 141,300; army, navy, and merchant seamen abroad, 215,374; total, 35,241,482.

"Laver's Conspiracy" was a plot formed by a barrister named Henry Laver, and others, with the object of seizing George I., the Prince of Wales, and the principal officers of State, and placing the Pretender on the throne. Laver was hanged at Tyburn, May 17, 1723.

The crocus derives its name from Crocus a young man who, as heathen mythology informs us, pined away into a flower, which has since borne his name. This flower, as affording saffron, is mentioned in Scripture, in Solomon's Song, iv. 14, and was much esteemed as a medicine and as an aromatic, and entered largely into the cookery of our forefathers.

Cannons were first used at the battle of Cressy in the year 1345; they were, however, of a small kind. Great guns were first used in England at the siege of Berwick in 1405. Muskets were not invented till the year 1521. Cannons were first made of wood, bound with iron. The earliest cannon-balls were of stone. Brass cannon were first cast in England by John Owen in 1585. Iron cannon were first cast in 1543, in Sussex.

No more than one couple in 10,000 live to celebrate their diamond wedding—the sixtieth anniversary of their marriage.

There are nearly 5,000 dialects and about 900 languages. The Bible, or the New Testament, is published in nearly 250 languages and dialects.

Bismarck doesn't care to see his own image in marble or bronze. He says he doesn't know what kind of expression to assume when he finds himself "by the side of his fossilized self."

Ice one inch and a half thick will support a man; four inches thick will support horses; five inches thick will support an 84-lb. cannon; ten inches thick will support a multitude; eighteen inches thick will support a railroad train.

It has been calculated that there are at least some 20,000 proverbs circulating among European nations alone; but proverbs, it may safely be asserted, abound in every part of the world, and perhaps nowhere more than in the east.

The Queen visited Dublin in 1849. The Times, remarking on the event, said: "No ovation of olden Rome, enriched with the spoils of conquered nations, and illustrated by the wealth of captured kings, was so glorious as the triumphant entry of Queen Victoria into Dublin."

Marshal Saxe has left it on record that there was no article of a soldier's dress more important than his boots; and that battles were won by legs. The Duke of Wellington, on being asked what was the best requisite for a soldier, replied, "A good pair of shoes!" "What next?" "A spare pair of good shoes!" "What next?" "A spare pair of soles!"

An increase of 2776 acres in the vineyards of Victoria in a single year is notable. Of the produce 233,564 cwt. of grapes are made into 1,378,590 gallons of wine and 5282 gallons of brandy, leaving 59,428 cwt. for other purposes. Compared with the year before last year's quantities, these figures show increases of 369,148 gallons of wine and 2291 of brandy. The number of growers last year was 1452.

Of all the islands on the Lower Lake of Killarney, Innisfallen is the most beautiful. The island is about twenty-one acres in extent, and commands the most varied and lovely views of the Lower Lake, its shores, and circumjacent mountain scenery. The Abbey, whose ruins are scattered about the island, is believed to have been founded in 600 by St. Finian. In this Abbey the celebrated "Annals of Innisfallen" were composed.

The largest library in the world is the Bibliotheque National in Paris, founded by Louis XIV. It contains 1,400,000 volumes, 200,000 pamphlets, 175,000 manuscripts, 300,000 maps and charts, and 150,000 coins and medals. The collection of engravings exceeds 1,300,000, contained in some 10,000 volumes. The portraits number about 100,000. The building which contains these treasures is situated on the Rue Richelieu. Its length is 540 feet, its breadth 130 feet.

The average length of a day in an Atlantic liner going east is, in round numbers, 26 hours, 20 minutes, and 24 hours, 40 minutes going west, consequently the average run per day would be about 25 miles longer on the outward than on the homeward voyage, or there would be a clear gain of 150 miles in six days. No wonder, then, that the westward passage seems to be performed more quickly than the eastward one, notwithstanding any small advantage which the Gulf Stream may give to the latter.

A polished and shod hoof, mounted so as to serve as a snuff-box, the property of the Guards' Club, bears the inscription: "Hoof of Marengo, rare charger of Napoleon, ridden by him at Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram, in the campaign of Russia, and lately at Waterloo;" while on the margin of the silver shoe is read: "Marengo was wounded in the hip at Waterloo, when his great master was on him, in the hollow road in advance of the French position. He had been frequently wounded before in other battles."

The guillotine takes its name from one Dr. Guillotine, who first introduced it into France, where it was adopted as an instrument for inflicting capital punishment by a decree of the 24th of March, 1792. It is an instrument for beheading, constructed on the same principle as the guillotine that was anciently used in Scotland, and was called a "Maiden"; it was introduced by the Regent, James, Earl of Morton, who, it seems, had met with it in his travels, and who, by a singular coincidence, was the first person whose head it severed.

Sunday comes from the Anglo-Saxon "Sunnandæg," day of the sun; Monday from Anglo-Saxon "Monandæg," day of the moon; Tuesday from Anglo-Saxon "Tiwesdag," from Tiew, the god of war; Wednesday from Anglo-Saxon "Wodensdag," from Odin, the god of storms; Thursday from Anglo-Saxon "Thursdag," day of Thor, the god of thunder; Friday from Anglo-Saxon "Frigedæg," day of Freya, goddess of marriage; Saturday from Anglo-Saxon "Saterdag," and Latin "Dies Saturnus," day of Saturn, the god of time.

The pottery manufacture—the making of bricks out of clay—is one of the very oldest in the world. It existed among the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Hebrews many centuries before the Christian era. The Egyptians not only made the ordinary kinds of pottery or earthenware, they also made a kind of porcelain, by fusing fine sand and covering it with a silicious or flinty glaze of various colors. The Assyrians were the first to mix coloring material with the clay. Porcelain differs from pottery in being made of finer materials.

Statistics show that in the reign of Henry VIII. no less than 72,000 criminals were executed. In the ten years between 1820 and 1830, 797 were executed in England alone. As the laws became less severe the number decreased. In the three years ending 1820 the executions in England and Wales amounted to 312; in the three years ending 1830 there were 178; in the three years ending 1840 they were 62 in number; in 1850 only 6 were executed in England; in 1860, 13; in 1870, 8; in 1880, 17; in 1885, 15; in 1886, 19; in 1887, 24, including 2 in London; and in 1888, 17, including 1 in London.

It is estimated that over one hundred millions of people now speak the English language; over forty-one millions the French; sixty millions German; thirty millions Italian; forty-one millions Spanish; thirteen millions Portuguese; and sixty-seven millions Russian.

The words that are said at the "Angelus" service in Catholic countries are taken from the 1st chapter of St. Luke, part of the 28th verse, and part of the following verses to end of 35th verse, and part of 38th verse. And then the 1st chapter of St. John, part of the 14th verse, followed by the Collect for the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary from the Book of Common Prayer.

The body of the Independents or Congregationalists arose about the latter part of the sixteenth century. They are so called from their avowing and maintaining that every congregation of Christians has, within itself, all that is necessary for its own government, and so should not be subject to other churches or their deputies; hence their steady opposition for so many years to all hierarchies and legislative church councils. The first Congregational church in England is said to have been established by a Mr. Jacob in the year 1616. They now number over 3,000 churches in the United Kingdom, besides several thousand village chapels and out-stations, over 600 in the colonies, besides about 200 on the continent. They have over 3,000 ministers, with about an equal number in America.

The custom of "toasting" our favorites appears to have had its rise in the reign of Charles II. Dr. Johnson observes that the meaning of the word at its first use was "a celebrated woman whose health is often drunk;" and the reason of her being so termed may be found in himself. "Titter," which says: "It happened that on a public day a celebrated beauty of these times (King Charles II.) was in the Cross Bath, at Bath, and one of the crowd of her admirers took a glass of the water in which the fair one had stood, and drank her health to the company. There was in the place a gray fellow half-fuddled, who offered to jump in, and swore, though he liked not the liquor, he would have the toast. He was opposed in his resolution, yet this whim gave foundation to the present honor which is done to the lady we mention in our liquor, who has ever since been called a 'toast.'"

In the palace of the Venetian Doges the dark and noisome dungeons still remain, where the inmates heard neither the blithe voice of their fellow-men passing in his boat outside, nor the sound of waters gurgling against the massive and slimy steps; where the light of day never shone, but where once in 24 hours a single torch was fixed in a loophole in the wall and allowed to burn itself out, that succeeding darkness might fall more heavily upon the sufferer's soul. By the red glare of these torches many inscriptions were written, which yet remain, expressing the wild misery and dark despair of those who scratched their heads into the stone with the point of a nail. Here is a cell more gloomy and horrible, if possible, than its neighbors; for he who entered knew he bade good-bye to life and hope, realized that the another day dawned and died he should be numbered among the dead. Its very atmosphere seemed still impregnated with terror and grief, yet harboring the agony and despair of men made mad by suffering. Through a square aperture in the wall light was handed; and here towards midnight came with noiseless tread the cowed confessor, who heard the whispered sins of the doomed, and spoke such consolation as might be given before the prisoner was led into a narrow passage, lighted with the smoky flames of flambeaux, and glistened by the executioner—pale to be strangled by the executioner—pale to be strangled by the executioner. Close by is the black and sombre water-gate, where those tortured out of life, strangled, or beheaded, in the names of justice, peace, and humanity, were carried; their bodies, encased in sacks, being placed in those black boxes with silent spectators, bore them away as to a lower world, to fling them into the Canal Orfano, where, on penalty of death, no fisher's net was thrown. —Illustrated London News.

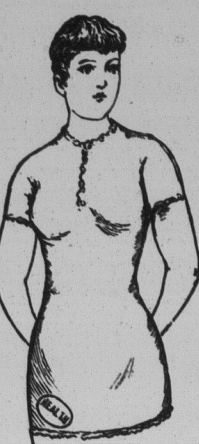
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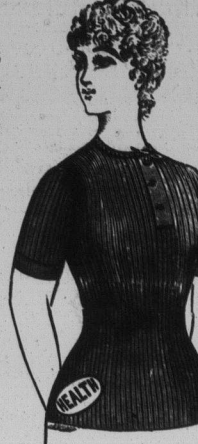
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Large INCREASE in Premium Income.
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DECREASE in Losses.
DECREASE in Expenses.
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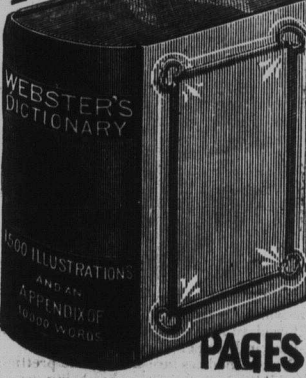
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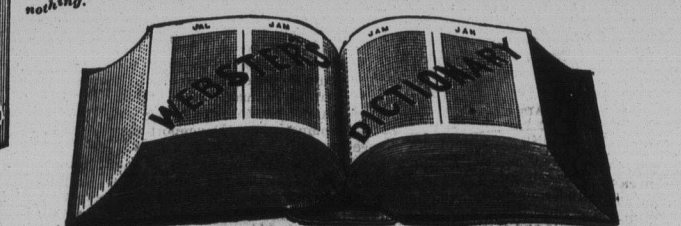
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