







E. Wright Band

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25<sup>th</sup>





# RAYS OF KNOWLEDGE;

OR,

## BOOK OF INFORMATION AND AMUSEMENT:

COMPRISING

(IN THE FORM OF QUESTION AND ANSWER,)

AN EXPLANATION OF

NUMEROUS OLD POPULAR CUSTOMS, CEREMONIES,

AND PROVERBS;

DERIVATIONS, ORIGINS, DEFINITIONS, &c.

ALSO, A

VARIETY OF MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS;

COMPILED FOR

THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH,

BY

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## PREFACE.

In the present age of reason and refinement, when the intellectual powers are fully developed, and the sun of learning sheds its potent radiance with brightest lustre, it is, or ought to be, a duty incumbent on every individual to do SOMETHING, however trifling, towards the advancement of knowledge, which an eminent writer\* has justly termed "The fruit of mental labour, the food and feast of the soul!" This cannot be more effectually accomplished than by using every exertion to direct the minds of youth into proper channels, and to offer to their particular attention those objects which tend, not only to the gratification of a laudable curiosity, but, which may also be adapted to more exalted purposes: for if the man be pointed out by Nature as the instructor of the child, the child may, with equal propriety, be termed "the father to the man." With this impression, and a hope that it may be of *some* benefit to the rising generation, this little unassuming volume is deferentially submitted to the notice of the public.

As a small book (like the present) requires only a brief introduction, it would be presumption

\*Dr. Keith.



to attempt its eulogy in any lengthened remarks; a few words will therefore suffice to make the reader acquainted with its design and origin. With respect to these, it may be observed, that the work was principally compiled, as occasion required, to satisfy the curiosity of the author's pupils, who are encouraged to ask for information on all subjects which they do not distinctly understand, in order that their leisure hours may not be unprofitably wasted in frivolous pursuits, or in the perusal of improper books.

As the questions in the following pages were promiscuously proposed, many of the answers have been extracted from the works of eminent writers, to whom every apology is offered for the liberty taken.

Since the author makes no pretensions, and lays but little claim to originality, the fastidious critic will have the less to condemn; and as he is unambitious of applause, so he is, in some degree, indifferent to censure. The improvement of the young is his only aim—the approbation of the intelligent his only wish; and should he fortunately succeed in these objects, his humble endeavours will have their desired reward.

## ORIGINS.

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Q. What is the origin of the exclamation Hip ! hip ! hip ! hurra ?

A. In the time of the Crusades, or as they have been generally termed, "Holy Wars," the people of Europe were excited to arms by the inflammatory preaching of one Peter, a hermit, who was in the habit of unfurling a banner with the letters H. E. P. emblazoned on it. These were the initials of the Latin words "*Hierosolyma est perdita*," which means "Jerusalem is destroyed." Some people whom he addressed, and who were unacquainted with Latin, read these letters as a word, and called it "Hep !" Whenever Peter's followers met with an unfortunate Jew, they raised the cry "Hep, hep, hep, hurra !" to hunt him down, and wreak their vengeance on the poor defenceless Israelite, before they encountered the Saracens, who were masters of the Holy Land.

Q. What is the origin of April-Fools' Day ?

A. April-Fools' Day, as it is generally termed, is a corruption of Auld, or All-Fools' Day, and originated with the Romans, who called it "Fool's Holiday," by way of ridiculing the ceremonies of the Druids. Some authors consider that it was designed to commemorate the Passions of our Saviour, which took place about that time ; and as the Jews sent him backward and forward from Ananias to Caiaphas, from Pilate to Herod, and afterwards back



again to Pilate, that ridiculous, or rather infamous custom, was meant to mock and torment him. In the present age, persons are often sent from one place to another, in order to promote ridicule and laughter. The year formerly began on the 25th of March, and great festivals were usually kept up eight days, of which the first and last were the principal, consequently the first of April is an octave of the 25th of March.

Q. Whence is the origin of commemorating the 1st of May, or May-day?

A. It is most probable that this originated with the northern nations, as their winters lasted from October till April, and they had a custom of welcoming the splendour of the returning sun with dancing and feasting, from joy that a better season had arrived for fishing and hunting. The Romans had their calends of May, when they sacrificed to Flora, the Goddess of Flowers. It is not unusual, in the present age, to see men, women, and children, go "Maying," as they term it, to cull flowers of the hawthorn, or May tree. Queen Elizabeth used to keep May games at Greenwich.

Q. What is the origin of the May-Pole?

A. It was originally a custom for the clergyman of a parish, on the first of May, to lead his parishioners to a neighbouring wood, and return in triumph with a long pole, bedecked with flowers, boughs, and other emblems of spring, around which they would dance and amuse themselves, strewing flowers, &c. when it was set up. This was called the *Morris* dance, and was usually represented by five men, and a boy dressed in a girl's habit, whom they termed the maid *Marion*, this being derived from the Moors, and was intended to represent the Queen or Lady of the May: when this was represented by a female, it was usual for the churchwardens to pay her for her



trouble. When a clown undertook the character, he received the title of *Malkin*, or *Maulkin*. In the present day the milk maids of London have their garland dance, as well as the chimney sweeps, but this is becoming obsolete.

Q. Whence is the origin of surnames?

A. Their origin is not only curious, but very interesting, there being scarcely any instrument or object in creation which has not been chosen as a subject for a surname: they were first used in 1102, and became common in 1200. Many names are so far corrupted, that it is rather difficult to trace them. For instance, we have the surname *Death*, which is derived from *De-Ath*, a noble family in France; also the surname *Devil*, which is derived from *De Ville*, another French family of great note; we have also *Moon*, *Star*, *Cloud*, *Heaven*, *Hedger*, *Ditcher*, and every trade, employment, place, office, dignity, vegetable, utensil, fish, colour; and, in short, everything in the whole system of nature. Originally people's surnames had only reference to the qualities which they possessed; and this plan was adopted in consequence of the increase of population; but taking the Bible for our guide, the surname was added to distinguish successive generations. Thus we read of *Isaiah*, the son of *Amos*, *Caleb*, the son of *Jephunnah*, &c. &c.; but on the introduction of Christianity, about the date above-mentioned, other names preceded the family names, such as *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, &c.

Q. Which of the English Monarchs had surnames?

A. They were originally considered nicknames (in imitation of the Romans.) The first on record is *King Alfred*, who was called the *Great*. His son *Edward* was called the *Elder*, from being the first of that name; *Edgar*, the *Peaceable*; *Edward* (his suc-

cessor) the Martyr; Edmund, Ironside; Harold, Harefoot; Edward, the Confessor; William I. the Bastard; William II. Rufus; Henry II. Plantagenet; Richard I. Cœur de Lion; John, Lackland; Edward I. Longshanks; Henry IV. Canker Bolingbroke; Henry V. Harry Monmouth; Richard I. Crookback; Mary, Bloody Queen, &c. &c.

Q. Why do the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh prefix a letter or syllable to many of their surnames?

A. The term "Mac," which implies son, is used by the Scotch, as Mac Donald, Mac Arthy, &c. or son of Donald, son of Arthy, &c. The Irish prefix O before names, as O'Connell, O'Brien, &c. which means a grandson. The Welsh use Ap, as Ap Rice, Ap Maurice, Ap Howell, &c. which means son of Rice, son of Maurice, son of Howell, hence the derivation Powell, Price, &c. But the English adopt various devices with their names; for instance, adding a letter or syllable, thus, Will or William will make Wills, Wilson, Willet, Williams, Williamson, &c.; Robert, Roberts, Robertson, Robbin, Robbins, Robson, Robinson, &c.

Q. Had not the ancients some peculiar ideas with regard to the names of children?

A. Yes. The Jews, Arabs, Persians, and other eastern nations, usually gave their daughters the names of those objects mostly prized by them; for instance, Susanna means a lily, Hedessa a myrtle, Tamar a palm-tree, Rhoda a rose, Tabitha, or Dorcas, an antelope, an animal remarkable for beautiful eyes; Sarah, the princess, or lady of the multitude, Sophia, wisdom, Mary, bitterness of the sea, Fanny or Frances, free, &c. We find it recorded also in the book of Job, that there were no females found so fair as his children, which is particularly expressed by their names. By Jemima, his first daughter, is meant "the day," fair as the day, "child of beauty,"



“*dove*, or fairest woman in the east”; Keziah means fragrant spice, or fragrant as cassia, which was a spice of great repute in early ages; this shows also, how fond the Arabians were of naming women after the most beautiful productions of the earth; Kerenhappuch means horn of paint, child of beauty, or blooming fairer than the tint of vermilion. Or it might have been from the beautiful black colour of the hair and eyebrows, or horn of Stibium, which was an ornamental colouring to make the eyebrows perfectly black, which colour they considered the most beautiful.

Q. Whence is the origin of burying grounds?

A. The custom of burying the dead in grounds set apart for that purpose, was established about the year 200. Before that time people were interred in the highways, and ancient tombs still exist in the roads near Rome, from which the words so often seen in modern epitaphs, are derived, viz. “*Siste viator*”—Stop traveller.

Q. Whence is the origin of tombstones, &c. being placed over graves?

A. It is certain that tombstones were only used subsequent to the introduction of Christianity, as we read in the Old Testament that people were buried in caves, under trees, and in other convenient places. The Egyptian Pyramids were the burying places of the monarchs, and mausoleums were used for the same purposes. The first account we have of tombstones was about the year 590, when Pope Gregory authorized the relatives of the deceased to erect tablets, tombstones, &c. to their memory; that on reading the inscription, they might be induced to offer up prayers for the welfare of their souls; but this was attended with a heavy expense, and added greatly to the revenues of the church. Prior to this, there were no churchyards in England, nor any

regular burying places; nor did they become common till the latter end of the seventh century.

Q. Were epitaphs used before tombstones?

A. It appears that epitaphs are of much more ancient date than tombstones, as we find the Athenians used to place a kind of scroll over the burying place of the dead, with the name inscribed, and the word good, hero, &c. expressive of their good wishes. The Lacedemonians would only allow epitaphs to those who died in battle. The Romans inscribed epitaphs to the spirits of the defunct, but in the present day they are generally of a fulsome nature, attributing virtues to the deceased which they never possessed whilst living. Mr. Gray, in his "Elegy, written in a Country Churchyard," alludes to "frail memorials," "shapeless sculpture," and "uncouth rhymes, spelt by th' unlettered muse."

Q. Whence is the origin of planting shrubs and flowers on the graves of the dead?

A. It was an ancient practice to plant herbs and flowers about the graves of the dead, thus discovering some idea of the resurrection. The women in Egypt go weekly to pray and weep at the sepulchres of the dead, and it is their usual custom to throw a sort of herb upon the tombs, which in Turkey and Asia Minor, are also adorned with the leaves of the palm-tree, boughs of myrtle and cypress, planted at the head and feet. Between some of the tombs is placed an ornamented chest of stone filled with earth, in which are planted herbs and aromatic flowers, which are regularly cultivated by the females of the family. At Aleppo, they grow myrtles about their graves, because they continue green a long period.

Q. Whence is the origin of decorating churches and houses with shrubs and branches at Christmas and other festivals?

A. This custom had its origin in paganism; the



heathens having been in the habit of adorning the temples, altars, and images of their favourite deity, whose festival they celebrated, with such shrubs and boughs of trees as they considered were agreeable to him. The ivy, in particular, was devoted to Bacchus, emblematic of his being always young. The Greeks named Bacchus, "Bromius," which the Romans translated Bruma, and his feasts were celebrated at the winter solstice, or Bruma; the primitive Christians were very inclinable to observe heathen festivals, fearing that if they abandoned them at once, it might prove injurious to that religion which they had adopted. Hence the custom alluded to in the question.

Q. Why were yew trees originally planted in churchyards?

A. Some people suppose that it was on account of their being evergreen, and furnishing branches for the decoration of churches at Christmas; others think that it was to prevent cattle from being turned into consecrated ground. This tree possessing noxious qualities, would poison them if they happened to eat it. It is also asserted that bees will not live where yew trees abound.

Q. Why do people wear mourning on the decease of a friend?

A. The origin of mourning is unknown, but it must have been a very ancient custom, as Abraham mourned for Sarah, Isaac for his father, and the children of Israel for Moses. But on the death of a friend, it is customary in most European countries, to wear black, this colour being deemed the most solemn. In eastern Asia, and other parts, different colours are preferred; for instance, the Chinese, ancient Romans, and Spartans, wore white, emblematic of their friends being then in Paradise, clad in robes of pure white. The Egyptians wear yellow,

in allusion to the fall and decay of the leaf. The Ethiopians wear brown, implying that the body has returned to its native brown earth. The Turks wear violet, in allusion to the early spring flower, or hope on one side, and sorrow on the other. Some of the islanders in the Pacific wear grey, implying that grey hairs go down to the grave in sorrow. The Sovereign of England wears purple for mourning, and in France the chancellor never wears mourning at all.

Q. What is the origin of bells?

A. Little bells of pure gold were used in the time of Moses by the Israelites in their religious ceremonies, as we read in Exodus, 39th chapter. The Jews, Greeks, and Romans, made them of brass and iron, not for purposes of religion, but to summon people to the baths. They were introduced into this country A. D. 550. They were formerly baptized or consecrated by the Bishop; hence the name *Tom* was given to some of the largest, as the great "Tom of Oxford," in honour of Thomas à Becket. By being anointed or exorcised, ignorant people supposed that they would drive away evil spirits, chase the devil from the air, calm tempests, extinguish fire, and raise the dead! Prior to the invention of bells, people were summoned to their devotion by the noise of rattles, similar to those used by our policemen.

Q. What is the origin of bridecake?

A. It originated in the Roman custom called *confarreation*, or dividing a cake made of wheat or barley, as an emblem of a firm alliance between man and wife. The custom of breaking a cake over the wife's head when she entered her husband's house, was derived from the Greeks, who, as an emblem of future plenty, poured fruit and figs over the heads of the bride and bridegroom.



Q. Whence had the term "pin-money" its derivation?

A. It is most probable that it had its origin in the simplicity of our forefathers, before pins were so numerous as they now are; as, in their bargains, it was usual to make a present to the wife and children of the person with whom they dealt, and this was termed pins, or pin-money, from which we may infer that the term has been similarly applied to the allowance which a husband makes to his wife for her own individual use, but which Mr. Addison considered ought to be termed needle-money, to put the ladies in mind of industry!

Q. What is to be understood by a person making a will and cutting off his heir with a shilling?

A. This had its origin with the ancient Romans, and was adopted to punish those children who were deficient in filial respect and duty. If the parent left any legacy, however small, he was considered "*compos mentis*," or in his right mind; but if he neglected to do this, the lawful heir could lay claim to his property as the next of kin. Hence arose the vulgar error of the necessity of leaving the heir a shilling, in order effectually to disinherit him.

Q. Whence had the heathen mythology its origin?

A. Many characters and events of the greatest note, recorded in mythology, had their origin in the Bible, which, in process of time, became grossly corrupted. The story of Pandora's box was founded on the fall of Adam and Eve; Neptune, or God of the Sea, was founded on the history of Noah, as well as that of Janus and Bacchus; Janus being represented with two faces, was descriptive of Noah, who lived both before and after the flood; and Bacchus, being the god of wine, was an allusion to Noah, who first discovered it. There is also a great

resemblance in the history of Bacchus to that of Moses. The labours of Hercules were founded on the stories of Jonah, David, Samson, and Joshua. Vulcan was a corruption of Tubal-Cain, who first taught the art of working in iron and brass. The account of the Titans, or giants, was emblematic of the attempt to build the Tower of Babel.

Q. What is meant by the Nine Muses?

A. In Mythology, the Nine Muses are described as daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, or Memory. The first, Clio (which means glory or renown) presided over history; second, Thalia, (blooming or flourishing) presided over comedy; third, Melpomene (attracting) the Muse of Tragedy; fourth, Terpsichore (amusing or rejoicing the heart,) Muse of Dancing; fifth, Euterpe (agreeable or pleasing) Muse of Instrumental Music; sixth, Erato (the amiable or lovely) Muse of light, or amorous Poetry; seventh, Polyhymnia (signifying a multitude of songs) Muse of Singing, Rhetoric, &c.; eighth, Urania (celestial) Muse of Astronomy; ninth, Calliope (voice) Muse of Rhetoric, heroic Poetry, and Eloquence.

Q. What is the origin of the fable of the Phoenix?

A. In the Holy Land, and in most eastern countries, the palm tree is, by way of distinction, called the Phoenix, in consequence of its great utility, and Palestine could scarcely be said to be inhabited without it. When the tree grows old, it is cut down and burnt to ashes, from which ashes springs a young palm tree, or Phoenix.

Q. Whence had the Gypsies their origin?

A. They were generally supposed to have descended from the Egyptians, one of the first people who pretended to foretel events, or deal in what is usually termed the magic art, or enchantments, as related in the Bible, when Moses requested from Pharaoh the



liberation of the Israelites. The Egyptians have been considered from time immemorial as cheats and impostors. The earliest account we have of them in England was in 1530, when they were driven hence by Henry VIII. The gypsies have a peculiar language of their own, which appears to be a compound of the most ancient languages in the world, but they never reveal it to any except their own tribe.

Q. What is the origin of banks ?

A. They were first known in Italy, where the Lombard Jews kept benches in the market place for the exchange of money and bills. The Italian word *banco* means bench, from which bank took its origin ; and the word bankrupt is supposed to be derived from the French *banqueroute*, which signifies a breaking or failing in the world ; for when either of those money changers, previously mentioned, became insolvent, his bench was broken, to warn the public that he could no longer continue his business.

Q. Whence had playing cards their origin ?

A. We may trace their origin to sacred and profane history. The four kings represent David, Alexander, Cæsar, and Charles, which names are still retained on the French cards. They also indicate the four monarchies of the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Franks, under Charlemagne. The consorts of these illustrious personages were Argine, Esther, Judith, and Pallas, typical of birth, piety, fortitude, and wisdom. Argine is merely a transposition of letters, and implies regina, or queen by descent. By the knaves we understand the servants or valets of the kings, as knave originally meant a servant, or armour bearer.

Q. Is there any thing remarkable in the origin of cards ?

A. We have no account of playing cards having been used till the reign of Charles V. of France, who

was insane, and they were invented for his amusement during his rational hours. Various games were brought into use for this purpose, and the names of several of the cards are of French origin. The word ace is derived from the Latin *assis*, signifying a piece of money, wealth, or riches. Trèfle is the French word for clubs, and implies clover, which is easily distinguished by its being painted similar to that plant. Pique, the French for spades, means pike, intimating that a magazine of arms should be well supplied. Diamond, in French, implies *carreau*, by which is meant a square, also a particular kind of arrow, but in a military sense, it means that the soldiers should have their arms complete before going to battle. Cœur, the French for heart, denotes courage, or bravery of the soldiers. The knave of any suit became a title of honour borne by gentlemen before they were knighted. The queen taking precedence of the knave, implies that the ladies regard every true knight as a champion of their honour, and an avenger of their wrongs! Alexander, the king of clubs, is an allegorical representation of the Macedonian prince, on account of his having generally led his army to battle in person. David, the king of spades, is meant to represent Charles II. of France, taking the Bible for this emblem, David was persecuted by Saul, and his son Absalom afterwards rebelled against him. The French prince, Charles, was proscribed and disinherited before he came to the throne, and his son Louis VII. rebelled against him, and caused his death. Cæsar, the king of diamonds: the fate of this noble Roman is so well known, that it needs little comment. Charles VIII., king of hearts, was a prince of great wisdom and virtue, and whoever has read his history, cannot be surprised at the epithet. Argine, the queen of clubs, was intended for Mary of Arragon, who was married to Charles VII. whilst that prince was Dauphin, and her beauty, wit, and learning were so great, that



she was highly respected by her rebellious son, Louis VII. Pallas, the queen of spades, was very appropriately meant for Joan of Arc, with whose history we are well acquainted. By Rachel, the queen of diamonds, was meant a beautiful woman, named Agnes Moyle, who was mistress to Charles VII.; she was greatly skilled in learning, and her manners were superior to those of most women of her age. She died by poison in 1704. It was administered to her by the king's banker, Jacques Cœur, (John of hearts.) Judith, the queen of hearts, was intended to represent Isabelle of Bavaria, daughter of Charles VI.; she was the cause of all the misery that overwhelmed France. Henry V. of England, expelled her from the French dominions: she died in great poverty, hated, and detested. The knave of clubs was Lancelot Du Lac, a knight in the age of Charlemagne, and also one of the knights of the round table, in the reign of the renowned king Arthur: he was bold, courageous, and honourable. The knave of spades, Ogier a Dane, also a knight of Charlemagne, and a very celebrated warrior. The knave of diamonds, was Hector de Gordon, a great warrior, under Charles VII., who received from him the command of 100 gentlemen, called the body of the battle axe. The knave of hearts, Lahier, or Etienne de Vignolles, who was one of the most renowned of Charles's captains: he accompanied Joan of Arc in the famous siege of Orleans. From these remarks the historical origin of playing cards is easily seen.

Q. Whence is the origin of placing signs at public houses, &c.?

A. It was originally a custom to hang a bush of evergreens before houses of entertainment, from which circumstance arose the proverb that "Good wine needs no bush," implying that where the best wine was sold people were sure to resort. As these

houses multiplied, different signs were necessary, many of which have the most ridiculous and absurd names, but by tracing their origin, some of those which appear the most nonsensical, will be found to be derived from reasonable subjects.

Q. Give a description of a few of these.

A. The Bag of Nails is derived from the Bacchanals; the Goat and Compasses, from "God encompasseth us," a favourite motto of Oliver Cromwell and his followers, who visited ale-houses; the Bull and Mouth, from Boulougne Mouth, a common sign when England held that harbour in France; the Swan with two Necks, from two nicks, or marks, in their bills; as gentlemen used to mark or nick their swans, in order to know their own when they mixed with those of their neighbours; the Belle Savage, from Mrs. Isabella, or Bella Savage, who originally kept the house known by this name.

Q. Why are the chequers painted on the door-posts of public houses?

A. Some people imagine they are meant to show that the game of draughts might be played there, but this is erroneous. The chequers were first used in the time of William the Conqueror, who was related to the Earl of Warren and Surrey. This nobleman, whose family arms were the chequers, espoused the cause of William, who accorded to him the exclusive right of granting licenses for the sale of malt liquor, and in order to enable the agents to collect the consideration money more readily, the door-posts were painted with those arms. This privilege was exercised so recently as the reign of William and Mary.

Q. What is meant by the sign of the Catherine Wheel?

A. Tradition mentions that St. Catherine lived



at Alexandria, where she preached the gospel, and converted numbers to Christianity, among whom were fifty philosophers. This excited the jealousy of the Emperor Maxentius, who cast her into prison, and ordered one of his artificers to invent an engine of extraordinary torture. This was constructed with four wheels, with saws, knives, and sharp nails, which ran against each other. The saint being bound to one of these wheels, and the other turned the contrary way, an angel struck the wheel, which flew to pieces, and killed a great number of her persecutors, whilst she remained unhurt. Those who survived cried "great is the God of the Christians," and were all converted, which so incensed the Emperor that he ordered her to be beheaded, but her remains were carried by angels to Mount Sinai, where they were found in an uncorrupted state 700 years after.

Q. What is to be understood by the sign of the three balls over pawnbrokers' shops?

A. A vulgar idea is current, viz.—if a person pledge any article, the chances are two to one that it be never redeemed: but this is not the true meaning. The three balls are the arms of the Lombard merchants who came over to England, and were the first who advanced money on security of goods, chattels, &c., by which system they accumulated an immense property, and built a great portion of Lombard-street, so named from themselves.

Q. What is to be understood by a barber's pole, or the pole usually observed before a barber's shop, streaked with white, red, &c.?

A. Different opinions have been given on this subject; some people imagine that it is emblematic of the poll of the head; others suppose, and with every appearance of credit, that originally the barbers' company, being incorporated with that of the

surgeons, was deemed equally respectable, and barbers were permitted to exercise the art of phlebotomy. The pole being streaked or embellished with different coloured paint, implied that the person who could shave and cut hair, would also bleed, if necessary; and the white streaks were intended to represent the filament which bound the arm. Barbers were separated from the surgeons, after a severe struggle for their rights, in 1744, since which they have lost the privilege of bleeding, except by a slip of the razor.





## CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES.

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Q. Whence arose the custom of uncovering the head, as a mark of respect?

A. This is of very ancient origin, as appears from the Grecian and Roman histories. Taking off the hat cannot be a very old practice, as hats have not been worn above two centuries; but probably this custom, like many others, came on by degrees, and as it is a very easy thing to move the hat, and put it on again, it might have been adopted on this account. But women have a more easy way of showing their respect to their superiors, viz. by a graceful inclination of the head, and bending the knee at the same time.

Q. Whence arose the custom of bowing ourselves as a mark of respect?

A. This custom has been observed from time immemorial, particularly in Eastern countries, where it was common for a man to bow himself before his sovereign till his face touched the ground! The Mahomedans, instead of kneeling whilst at prayers, bow the body very low, with the hands crossed over the breast, or resting on the knee, which is considered still more humble: but the more common bow is a slight inclination of the body, with the right hand laid on the heart, which is thought sufficient to mark our respect towards those in high life.

Q. Whence arose the custom of shaking hands?

A. It is not exactly known, but is generally supposed to be of heathen origin, viz. from Fides, the Goddess of Faith and Oaths. Her symbol was a white dog, being the most faithful animal, and a figure where two women are joining hands as a token of friendship and fidelity. Others are inclined to think that it took its rise from the kissing of hands, which custom originated with the Greeks, and persons were considered atheists who would not kiss their hands on entering the temple. This custom declined with paganism, and shaking hands as a greeting was substituted. The ancient Romans used to give their hands to be kissed by their inferiors; but with their equals they joined hands and embraced. The custom of kissing and shaking hands is now practised in every country; but the former is becoming obsolete, except as a mark of duty and obedience from the subject to the sovereign.

Q. Whence arose the custom of kissing the New Testament as an oath?

A. It took its rise among the Jews, who used to swear with the book of the law open before them, holding a phylactery in their hands. After this, they ventured to touch the book, and then reverentially kiss it. In subsequent ages, Christians used to swear by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This was in vogue so late as the fourth century.

Q. Whence arose the custom of saying grace at meals?

A. The ancient Greeks considered their table as the altar of friendship, and they would not partake of their meals till they had solemnly offered a portion of them to their gods as the first fruits. The ancient Jews always offered up prayers before meat, and the primitive Christians followed their example, which custom is observed to the present time.



Q. Whence arose the custom of drinking healths?

A. This custom existed so long ago as 1134, before the Christian era. But some persons suppose that it arose from Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, drinking to the health of Prince Vortigern in a golden goblet, at an entertainment, in conformity with the Scripture compliment, "O king live for ever!" Others think that when the Danes held tyrannic sway in England, and assassinations were prevalent, a person was afraid to drink in company without a friend saying, "I pledge you," intimating that he pledged himself for his safety whilst drinking. The Romans used to drink as many glasses to the health of their favourite ladies, as there were letters in her name.

Q. Whence arose the custom of eating goose at Michaelmas?

A. It is not true that eating goose at Michaelmas had its origin with Queen Elizabeth. Some think it arose from the great festival of St. Michael, which happened at a time when geese were most plentiful; and it was a custom for the tenant of an estate to present his landlord with a goose on Michaelmas day. It is a well-known fact that geese are in much better condition at this season, from their having grazed over the stubble land; and there was a vulgar opinion, that if you eat goose on Michaelmas day, you will not want money all the year round.

Q. Whence arose the custom of perambulating the boundaries of parishes?

A. Beating the boundaries of parishes on Ascension-day, is a festival well known in modern times, and had its origin in heathenism, in imitation of the feast called "Terminalia," which took place in February, in honour of the god Terminus, who was supposed to preside over bounds and limits, and to punish all unlawful usurpation of land, &c. On this

festival, the country people assembled together, and crowned the stones which separated their possessions with garlands and flowers, and sprinkled them, in a solemn manner, with the blood of a victim, generally that of a lamb or a young pig, which was offered to the god who presided over the boundaries: libations of wine and milk were also made at the same time.

Q. Whence arose the custom of clothing servants in liveries?

A. This originated with our British ancestors, who clothed their vassals in a sort of uniform, in order to distinguish families of distinction, in the same manner as they painted arms and symbols on their clothes and armour, as previously stated.

Q. What gave rise to the term "honey moon" for the first month after marriage?

A. This is a common expression, and had its origin with the Saxons, who, before they visited England, had adopted the phrase from a custom among the northern nations, of drinking a beverage which they were extremely fond of, and made principally from honey, for thirty days after a marriage; and it is stated that Attila, king of Hungary, drank so freely of this liquor on the night of his wedding, that he was found suffocated in his bed.

Q. Whence arose the custom of wearing rings on fingers?

A. It is impossible to trace the origin of this custom, but it is supposed, that in early ages, it was instituted as an emblem of authority and government; for we read in the Bible, that Pharaoh took his ring from his finger and presented it to Joseph, as a sign of vested authority. In conformity to ancient usage, the Christian church adopted the ring, in the ceremony of marriage, as a symbol of the authority with which the husband invested his



wife. This was made of gold, which metal the ancients adopted as a symbol of love, the ring itself being an emblem of eternity, or love without end. Rings, it appears, were first worn in India, whence the practice descended to the Egyptians, thence to the Greeks, from whom it passed to the Romans, &c.

Q. What gave rise to the wedding ring being placed on the fourth finger ?

A. The wedding ring, which was considered an emblem of eternity, was placed on the fourth finger of the left hand, because it was anciently believed that a small artery ran from this finger to the heart. This has been contradicted by experience ; but several eminent authors, both physicians and divines, were formerly of this opinion, therefore they thought this finger the most proper to bear the pledge of love, that from thence it might be conveyed to the heart. Others are inclined to think that it was in consequence of this finger being less used than any other, and is more capable of preserving a ring from bruises. Family rings were formerly given away at a marriage, as wedding presents.

Q. Were there not two rings formerly used in marriages ?

A. Yes. There was the ring of espousals before marriage, as well as the wedding ring : this was observed till A.D. 850, when each continued separate. In the Greek church, espousals and marriages were distinct services. In espousals the parties exchanged rings in pledge of mutual fidelity, but within the last few centuries this has been discontinued in the Church of England.

Q. Whence arose the custom of marrying by license ?

A. We have no authentic account, but it is generally supposed to have been introduced with the

Reformation, when, in Shrewsbury, no woman could marry without a license from the king; to whom, she with her first husband, paid the sum of ten shillings. If she took a second husband, the sum was doubled.

Q. What system was formerly adopted with regard to criminals going to execution?

A. Intoxicating draughts used anciently to be given to malefactors, just before their execution, to stupify them, and render them insensible to their pain. The compassionate ladies of Jerusalem generally provided this potion, which consisted of frankincense and wine, at their own cost. This humane custom was first adopted by king Solomon.

Q. Whence arose the custom of embalming the dead?

A. Among the ancient Egyptians, who wished to preserve the remains of great warriors, or those persons who had performed any illustrious actions. It was believed that as long as the body was kept from corruption, the soul hovered near, and would ultimately re-animate the body in its original form; but if the deceased were known to be guilty of any crime, his body was not allowed to be embalmed or buried. One of the substances for embalming was a sort of wax, which, in the Arabic language, means *mum*, from which is derived the English term *mummy*: but the Egyptians had various modes of embalming, according to the ability or wealth of the friends of the deceased. They also embalmed the bodies of those animals they held sacred, such as the monkey, lion, crocodile, bear, rat, dog, cat, wolf, &c.

Q. Why are bells tolled at deaths and funerals, and what is meant by the curfew?

A. Tolling bells had its origin in superstition, and was supposed to be an effectual plan to drive away evil spirits which haunted the house and bed



of their victims, but were kept away by the ringing of bells. It was also intended to invite passers-by to pray for the soul of the departed. The curfew bell means cover-fire, and was instituted by William the Conqueror, who had it rung in every town at eight o'clock in the evening, to warn all his subjects to put out their fires and candles, under the penalty of a very heavy fine.

Q. Whence arose the custom of howling at funerals?

A. This originated with the Irish, who, in the present day, make a great outcry on the decease of their friends, hoping thus to awaken the soul, which they suppose might otherwise be inactive. It was practised by the Greeks, Arabs, and Romans; the latter had their *preficæ*, whose duty it was to superintend the manner and form of their lamentations.

Q. Whence is the origin of Christmas boxes?

A. It was anciently a custom to carry a box from door to door, for the collection of little presents at Christmas. In an old work entitled "The Athenian Oracle," it is stated that, formerly, it was a custom for the monks to offer masses for the safety of all ships that went on long voyages, to each of which a little box was affixed (under the custody of the priest) into which the sailors put money or other valuables, in order to secure the prayers of the church. At Christmas these boxes were opened, and were thence called "Christmas boxes." In order that no person, however indigent, should omit these presents, the poor were encouraged to beg "box-money" of their richer neighbours, to enable them to add to the priest's perquisites. The custom of "boxing" has been observed throughout England ever since.

Q. Why was the twelfth day after Christmas celebrated?

A. It appears this originated with the Greeks and Romans, who had a custom of drawing lots for a king and queen on this day, in allusion, it is supposed, to the offerings made by the wise men to the Saviour of the world, from an idea that the eastern magi were kings. In fact, the French term it "the feast of kings;" but the Greeks, about this season of the year, drew lots with beans, and, like kings, exercised some temporal authority. It was formerly practised in our universities by the division of a cake, into which a bean, piece of coin, or ring, had been placed, and he and she who chanced to obtain these were saluted as king and queen. The cakes originally used, called twelfth cakes, were made of flour, honey, pepper and ginger, but are now composed of plums and other rich ingredients, and frosted over with sugar. On this day, it has been usual for the monarch, or his chamberlain, to offer gold, frankincense, and myrrh, at the chapel royal, with a vast number of other ceremonies, an amusing account of which may be found in Mr. Hone's Every Day Book.

Q. Why are mince pies a favourite dish at Christmas?

A. The dishes mostly in vogue among the ancient Christians for breakfast and supper on Christmas eve were, first, a boar's head, stuck with rosemary, and a large apple or orange in its mouth; then plum porridge and mince pies; all of which they considered a test of orthodoxy, as these esculents were held in abomination by the Jews. The mince pies were made long, in imitation of the crotch, or manger, in which Christ was laid.

Q. Whence is the custom of eating hot cross buns on Good Friday?

A. This, like many others, was a sort of reverential custom observed by the primitive Christians,



in commemoration of the death of Christ on the cross. These buns have the sign of a cross imprinted on them, and are to be met with in almost every town in the kingdom. The uneducated still support a superstition, that if they carefully dry these cakes, and grate them into powder, they are infallible against many diseases.

Q. What is the origin of mummers?

A. Mumming was one among the numerous pristine sports kept up at Christmas, and in the reign of Elizabeth extended even to royalty! Among the common people, it principally consisted in the exchange of clothes between men and women, and corks were burnt to blacken their faces, to prevent a recognition, when they went from house to house to partake of Christmas cheer.

Q. Whence arose the custom of sending valentines on the 14th of February?

A. It took its rise from a superstitious heathen habit, when youth used to send their favourites a kind of love-letter in honour of one of their goddesses, as they supposed that on this day birds chose their mates. St. Valentine was a holy priest, who suffered martyrdom in the persecution under the Roman Emperor Claudius II. A.D. 271. Some people suppose, that on this day the patron saints were chosen in the papal countries; others think that the feast of Lupercalia was celebrated at this period, and that St. Valentine's festival was introduced instead.

Q. Whence arose the custom of half holidays on Saturdays?

A. In many countries, among other curious customs, it was usual to keep holy the afternoon on Saturdays, in order to usher in the Sabbath by religious meditation. People attended vespers in the evening, and whoever neglected to do so, was liable

to punishment. Among the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, it was usual to send out a herald to give intelligence of the approach of the Sabbath, and to command its observance : and the peasants, in most Christian countries, refused to do any work after the noon of Saturday till the following Monday.

Q. Whence arose the custom of carrying standards in battle ?

A. The earliest account of them is in the Bible. It is evident they were in use among the Hebrews, in the time of Moses, in order to distinguish the tribes. The standard of Benjamin was a wolf; that of Ephraim, a steer.

Q. Whence arose the custom of poisoning instruments of war ?

A. The art appears to have been very ancient, as we read it in the book of Job, chap. vi. ver. 4. It was also practised by the Arabians, Moors, and people of other nations. Homer also states that Ulysses went to Ephyra for poison to smear his brazen-pointed arrows. The Indians dip their arrows in the gall of asps, vipers, and other poisonous preparations, which fire the blood of the wounded, cause great pain, and make the least wound mortal.



## DERIVATIONS.

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Q. Whence had the four quarters of the world their derivation?

A. Europe derives its name from Europa, daughter of Agenor, King of Phœnicia, who was represented to have been carried hither by Jupiter. Asia received its name from Asia, the wife of Prometheus, and daughter of Oceanus. Africa is derived from Ophir, grandson of Abraham, or, as some authors suppose, from the Hebrew *pherie*, an ear of corn, from its fertility. America is (unjustly) so called from Americus Vespucius, who gave it his own name after the death of Columbus, the first who discovered it, and named it Columbia.

Q. Why was England called Great Britain?

A. Britain was the name given to England, Scotland, and Wales united; it was previously called Albion, from the whiteness of its rocks towards the continent, or the coast of France; or, as some authors think, from the word *Olbian*, which means rich or happy, in regard to its situation and fertility. It was subsequently named Britain, from *pryd* and *cain*, two words implying beauty and white; or, as some suppose, from the word "bryth," that is, painted or stained, as the original inhabitants used to dye or stain their bodies with a herb of that name.

Q. Why were the original inhabitants of Britain called Britons?

A. Some writers assert that the word originated with Brute, a Trojan prince, who settled in the island with his companions after the overthrow of Troy. Others suppose that the word is a corruption of Britain, "Bri" implying honour, and "Tain" a river, the island abounding in rivers.

Q. What is the origin of the word Plantagenet, which name was first borne by Henry II.?

A. No positive account is given by writers of antiquity, but they suppose that the first Earl of Anjou, whose conscience smote him for some bad action, went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was soundly scourged with broom twigs, or plantagenistæ, which grew there in abundance; after which he took the name of Plantagenet or Broomstalk, which his noble posterity still retain.

Q. Is there anything remarkable in the names of English towns?

A. Most of our ancient towns derive their names from the Saxon, and were principally called according to their locality,—thus, a great number end in "Combe," such as *Ilfracombe*, *Yarcombe*, &c. *Combe* signifies a valley between hills, or a valley with trees on each side. Others end in "Minster," which means a monastery or conventual church. Others end in "Mouth," which signifies the mouth of the river near, or on which the town stands. "Ton," implies a hill, hedge, or wall. "Wyke," or "Wick," means a village, castle, or bay. "Burgh," means borough. "Ham," a house, farm, or village. "Chester," a castle or town on the highway. "Bury," a dwelling-place or house. "Ford," a shallow part of a river. "Port," a place or harbour for ships. "Pool," a large collection of deep and standing water, supported by springs. "Hurst," a little wood or thicket of trees, or orchard. "Wald," or "Wold," a forest. "Burn," or "Brune," a river, ford, or brook.



Q. What is the origin of the word England?

A. It derives its name from the Angles, who came from Anglia, in Denmark. This people joined the Saxon adventurers, a people of North Germany, who were invited over to assist the Britons in their wars against the Picts, and who eventually became masters of the kingdom. The Scots received their names from Scoti, a colony from Ireland. The Picts were a Gothic colony from Norway, and received the name of Caledonians, Caledonia being the ancient name of Scotland.

Q. What are we to understand by the words prophet, evangelist, apostle, disciple, and martyr?

A. A prophet means a good man, inspired by the Almighty with power to foretell what will happen. Evangelist, an inspired writer, or messenger of good tidings; a revealer of the gospel, &c. Apostle implies a person or messenger sent on business of importance, and, by way of eminence, it is applied to those twelve disciples commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach his gospel. Disciple means a person who follows any particular sect of people, either in religion, art, or science. Martyr means one who lays down his life for the sake of his religion, which he declares to be true, or who will undergo any punishment rather than renounce his opinion.

Q. What is meant by a pope, abbot, friar, and cardinal?

A. The appellation of pope (or father) was originally given to all christian bishops, but was usurped solely by the bishop of Rome in the eleventh century, with whom it has remained ever since. Abbot signifies the superior individual of a monastery or abbey. Friar, or brother, is a term common to the monks of all orders, but generally confined to those monks who are not priests, for all in holy orders are termed fathers. Cardinal is the chief governor of the Romish Church, by whom the pope is elected.

The number of cardinals is seventy, namely, six bishops, fifty priests, and fourteen deacons. These constitute the sacred college, and are chosen by the pope.

Q. What is meant by a dean, rector, vicar, priest, deacon, curate, and layman?

A. A dean is a prime dignitary in a cathedral or collegiate church, being usually the president of the chapter. Chapter, in canon law, means a congregation of clergymen, under the authority of a president, or dean. A rector means a clergyman who has the care and cure of a parish possessing all the tithes, &c.; but when the *prædial*, or great tithes, which mean those belonging to, or growing on farms, are inappropriate, (that is, when the possessions of the church are in the hands of a layman) the parson is called a vicar, and the layman rector; consequently a vicar implies the priest of a parish, the great tithes of which are appropriated and belong to some chapter, religious house, or layman, who receives them, and only allows the vicar the small tithes, or a suitable salary. The duties of rectors and vicars are to take care of the congregation, perform divine service, marriages, christenings, burials, &c. A priest means a person who is invested with holy orders, and has authority to preach, pray, and administer the sacrament, to which none are admitted under the age of twenty-four years. A deacon is one of the lowest orders of the clergy, or one in a state of probation or trial for holy orders for one year, after which he is admitted into full orders as a priest; prior to this he is not allowed to read the absolution, or administer the sacramental bread. Curate signifies an assistant to the incumbent of a church, who performs divine service in his stead, for which he receives a salary. A layman means any person not in holy orders, but who follows any secular employment.



Q. What is understood by a patriarch, pilgrim, and primate?

A. A patriarch is a father and a ruler of a family, and was applied chiefly to those who lived before Moses, who were both priests and princes. Pilgrim, one who travels to distant places and countries on some religious account. Primate, is an archbishop, who is invested with a jurisdiction over other bishops.

Q. What is the state or degree of precedence among the officers of the crown?

A. The Lord President, Lord Chancellor, Lord Privy Seal, First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State, Foreign Secretary, Colonial Secretary, President of the Board of Control, President of the Board of Trade, First Lord of the Admiralty, Paymaster of the Land Forces, Postmaster General, and several others.

Q. What is meant by an archdeacon?

A. An archdeacon is next in degree to a dean, and is a kind of subordinate bishop, with authority or jurisdiction over the clergy; and he is obliged by virtue of his office, to visit every two years in three, the various churches, and see that every thing is in proper repair, &c. reform abuses, and punish offenders by spiritual censure. They have power also to suspend a clergyman who acts improperly, and even to excommunicate, but the most weighty affairs are generally transferred to the bishops.

Q. What is meant by the word protestant?

A. The word itself denotes all Christians who deny the pope's supremacy, and other doctrines of the Romish Church. It was first applied to those reformers in Germany, who embraced and adhered to the doctrines of Martin Luther, because, in 1529, they protested against a decree of the Emperor Charles V. declaring that they appealed to a free council.

Q. What is the origin of the terms whig and tory?

A. Whig was a name of reproach given by the court party to their antagonists for resembling the principles of the whiggs, or fanatical conventicles in Scotland; and tory was given by the country party to that of the court, comparing them to the *tories*, or popish robbers in Ireland. They formerly were called whiggs from Whiggamors, a name given to the Scots in the south-west; who, for want of corn in that quarter, used annually to repair to Leith to buy stores that came from the north, and all who drove were called whiggamors, or whiggs, from the term wiggam, in driving their horses. In the year 1638, the Presbyterian ministers incited an insurrection against the court, and marched with the people to Edinburgh; this was called the whiggamor's inroad, and after this, all that opposed the administration in Scotland were called whigs, and from hence the term was adopted in England.

Q. What are we to understand by the word Jacobite?

A. It is derived from Jacobus, and was a sort of reproachful epithet applied to those who disapproved of the resolution of King William, and supported the interest of James. It is also applied to those who vindicate the rights of passive obedience, and the divine right of kings; in which sense it has the same signification as the word tory. The term whig, is applied to those who are friendly to civil and religious liberty; who support the just prerogatives of the reigning monarch, without allowing an abuse of power, and who sternly advocate the rights of the people.

Q. What is meant by a Lord Lieutenant of a county?

A. The Lord Lieutenant of a county means a nobleman selected by the sovereign from among the



principal peers of the kingdom ; and formerly their power was much more extensive than at present. Their business is to form, arm, and array local armies, troops, regiments, &c. and the men are termed " militia," now deemed unnecessary, on account of the regular standing army, regiments of yeomanry-cavalry, and volunteers, the officers of which are men of fortune, and by which, in cases of emergency, our standing army can at any time be sent abroad, and the country considered to be in a proper state of defence.

Q. Whence arose the title of marquis ?

A. A marquis was first so called from the government of marches and frontier countries ; such as the marches of Wales and Scotland, when each was the country of an enemy. In Germany they are called margraves ; but marquis was, originally, a French title, and the first who received it in England was Robert Vere, earl of Oxford, who was made marquis of Dublin by Richard II.

Q. What is meant by a sheriff ?

A. A sheriff means a shire-reve, or governor of a shire or county ; that is, a gentleman nominated by the monarch to enforce a due observance of the laws in the county. His business is to execute the mandates of the sovereign, and all writs directed to him from the courts of law. He also empannels juries to bring causes and criminals for trial, and sees that the sentences, both in law and justice, are properly executed. He appoints an under sheriff, officers of court, constables, gaolers, &c. ; and at the court of assize, when he waits on the judges, he has a number of men in rich liveries to attend on him.

Q. Who are authorized to use the title of esquire ?

A. Some people suppose that any gentleman in possession of property value £300 per annum, may use the title, but this supposition is erroneous. We

often see it applied, as a matter of courtesy, to rich merchants, opulent tradesmen, and people who live on their own private property ; but, strictly speaking, it is only applicable to the eldest sons of viscounts, lords, younger sons of noblemen and their heirs, elder sons of knights, baronets, knights of the Bath and their heirs ; also those who serve the monarch in any worshipful calling or public office in the kingdom, such as high sheriff, justice of peace, (whilst he holds his commission) coroners, and masters in chancery. The eldest sons of peers in Great Britain are only esquires in terms of law, although they are termed lords. If the monarch puts spurs on the heels of any gentleman, and a collar marked S. S. on his neck, he is reckoned an esquire.

Q. What is the origin of the words lady and gentleman ?

A. Lady is derived from the Saxon "Leff-day," loaf-giver or bread-giver, it being formerly a custom for the affluent to reside constantly at their manor house, and for the mistress of the mansion to distribute a quantity of bread with her own hands : hence she was called leff-day, since corrupted to lady. The term gentleman, though now applied to every person of respectability and unimpeachable character, was, originally, conferred by Richard II. in 1430, on all those whose ancestors were freemen, and owed obedience to their prince only.

Q. What is meant by the word alderman ?

A. The word alderman is derived from the Saxon "aelder-man," or a man advanced in years ; the second rank of nobility, equal to the earl of the Dano-Saxon.

Q. What is meant by yeomen and beefeaters ?

A. A yeoman, in the common acceptation of the word, means a gentleman farmer ; originally it meant



a yewman, from his bearing the bow in battle, which was generally made of yew, from which we may infer that a yeoman was of equal consequence with an esquire, or shield bearer. We have now yeomen of the crown, guard, chamber, &c. all persons of some rank in society. In some languages, however, it signifies boy, servant, knave, &c. In this sense it might have been used in the patriarchal forms of society, where the younger people waited on the elders. "Beefeaters" is a corruption of the French word *beaufetiers*, or keepers of the king's plate on the sideboard; and as the yeomen of the guard, when in the sovereign's presence, are stationed near the beaufet, they are termed *beaufetiers*: hence beefeaters.

Q. Whence had the word husband its origin?

A. The word is Anglo-Saxon, and simply signifies the bond of the house, or family housebond, as by him the family is formed, united, and bound together, which, on his death, is disunited and scattered. Hence we account for farmers and petty landholders being called, so early as the twelfth century, husbandi, as appears in a statute of David II. king of Scotland. This etymology of the word appears plainer in the orthography of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in which the word is often found written house-bond.

Q. What is meant by the word spinster?

A. In former ages females were not allowed to marry till they had spun a regular set of bed-furniture, and till after their marriage they were called spinsters, which continues to the present day.

Q. What is the origin of knighthood?

A. In the barbarous ages of ignorance and superstition, the nobility, who, nothing else to do, used to wander about the country in search of adventures, and devoted themselves to the protection and rescue

of ladies who were forcibly carried away by men that regarded neither justice nor humanity, and of whom many marvellous and fabulous stories are told. These were called *knights-errant*. The order of the knights of the round table, instituted by Prince Arthur, is the most ancient on record.

Q. Are there many different orders of knighthood?

A. Yes, in almost every European state. We have no account of the order of the *Bath* till the time of Richard II. who created four knights: they bathed themselves, and used several religious ceremonies the night before their creation; and up to the reign of Charles II. it was usual for the sovereign to create a certain number of knights of this order prior to his coronation. Knights templars were a military order of monks, established at Jerusalem in the twelfth century, for the protection of the temple, sepulchre, &c. and abolished in 1312, in consequence of their vicious and tyrannical conduct. They were so called from living in or near the temple.

Q. What are we to understand by the order of the garter?

A. An order of knighthood, instituted by Edward III. in consequence, it is supposed, of the countess of Salisbury dropping her garter whilst dancing, which the king handed to her with the expression "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," and observing some of his friends smile, he declared that many of those who laughed should soon be proud of wearing the garter, on which he created the order, the knights of which wear a blue riband, or garter. Another account is that Edward imitated the celebrated King Arthur, by the order of the round table; but as a number of foreign warriors crowded to him, the French king, with whom Edward was at war, instituted an order of his own, which soon procured



him a like number of warriors; but having violated the laws of hospitality, by seizing some English lords, Edward was so provoked, that he cried "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," and converted the round table into the order of the garter, because at the battle of Cressy, where he defeated the French king, he fixed his garter on the end of his lance as a signal for the engagement.

Q. What is meant by the words "*Dieu et mon droit*," and "*Ich dien*," which we observe in the royal arms of England?

A. By the first is meant "God and my right," which has been the motto of the royal arms since the defeat of the French by Richard I. at Gisors, in Normandy, (France,) in 1198, the French monarch's parole for the day being "*Dieu et mon droit*." The motto of queen Elizabeth, and also queen Anne, was "*Semper idem*,"—"Always the same." The words "*Ich dien*" mean, in the German language, "I serve." These were added to the arms of the Prince of Wales after the battle of Cressy, in which John, king of Bohemia, who was blind, was killed. His crest was three ostrich feathers with the above motto, which Edward the Black Prince assumed in commemoration of his victory.

Q. Why are the people of London nicknamed cockneys?

A. In the reign of Edward III. a knight held some land at Cukenev, in Nottinghamshire, free of rent, during the reign of the king, on condition of his shoeing the king's palfrey, or saddle horse, on each foot with the king's nails and materials; but, if he lamed it, he was to give the king another worth four marks. The knight of Cukenev attended at the king's stable to perform his duty, when one of the monarch's farriers offered to instruct him how to do it, but, in order to save his purse, he declined the

offer, and consequently, by his ignorance, lamed the horse. This he continued to do till he had to forfeit more marks than the value of the land, by which act of folly the word became proverbial, even at court, and every stupid, untutored citizen, was called a Cukeneý knight, which was afterwards changed to Cockney.



## EXPLANATIONS.

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Q. What is the meaning of the word January, or the first month in the year?

A. It was derived from Janus, a heathen deity, who was supposed to preside over the gates of heaven. He was represented with two faces, one looking towards the old year, the other towards the new. He was the first king of Italy, and the ancient Romans used to give the doors in their houses the name of Janua, from which circumstance some authors suppose that Janua frequently represented a door or opening to a new era. The heathens of old used to celebrate this festival on new year's day, with every sort of veneration, attended with excesses of every description; the primitive Christians kept it as a solemn fast, which is still partially observed in England. In the Saxon language it means "wolf month," as the wolves at that season are desperately mischievous, from being unable to procure food, through the extremity of cold and snow, to satisfy their ravenous appetites.

Q. What is the meaning of the word February?

A. This word is derived from Februo, to purify, because the feasts of purification were celebrated at this season; but the Romans offered sacrifice to their goddess Februo for the spirits of their departed friends. In the Saxon language it implies "cole-wort," or "spring-wort," because worts begin to spring about this time.

Q. What is meant by the word March, or the third month of the year?

A. This was originally the first month in the Roman year, and was dedicated to Mars, the god of war. In the Saxon language it means "lengthening month," as the days begin visibly to lengthen, or rather the days begin to be longer than the nights.

Q. From what is the word April derived?

A. This month is so called from *aperio*, which signifies to open, because nature now begins to reveal its hidden charms, and expand its beauties. In Saxon it was called "Oster," or "Easter Monat," because the feast of their goddess Eastre was then celebrated.

Q. Why was the fifth month called May?

A. It was so named by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in honour of Maia, the mother of Mercury; but in Saxon it signifies "three milkings," as they then milked their cows three times daily.

Q. What is the meaning of the word June?

A. It was so called by the Romans, in honour of Mercury, who was represented as a juvenile figure, to which they applied the word *Junius*. The Saxons called it "weyd," or "meadow-month," because their cattle were then turned out to feed in the meadows.

Q. What is meant by the word July?

A. It was originally called by the Romans *Quintilis*, being the fifth month of their year, but was changed to *Julius* in honour of Julius Cæsar. In Saxon it meant "hay-month," as they used to cut their hay at this season.

Q. What is meant by the word August?

A. It was anciently called by the Romans *Sex-tilis*, or sixth month from March; but in honour of Augustus Cæsar, second Emperor of Rome, it was



changed to August. The Saxons called it “arn-monat,” or “barn-month,” because they then filled their barns.

Q. What is meant by the word September?

A. It was derived from *Septem*, the seventh month of the Roman year, and *imber*, which means a shower. The Saxons named it “grist-month,” as they then carried their new corn to the mill.

Q. What is meant by the word October?

A. This was the eighth month of the Roman year, reckoning from March. In Saxon, it means “wine-month,” because their grapes were then pressed to make wine, or “winter-month,” as the winter commenced with the full moon of this month.

Q. What is meant by the word November?

A. This word is derived from *Novem ad imber*, or the ninth month of the Roman year. In Saxon, it was sometimes called “blot monat,” or “blood-month,” from the number of cattle slain and stored for winter provisions. Others named it “windy-month,” because of the high winds common in this month.

Q. What is meant by December?

A. From *Decem*, the tenth month of the Roman year; the Saxons called it “winter-month,” from the intensity of the cold; or “holy-month,” on account of the nativity of Christ.

Q. What are we to understand by Plough Monday, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holiday Saturday, and Palm Sunday?

A. Plough Monday is the first Monday after Epiphany, and was observed by our ancestors by drawing a plough in procession on this day, indicating the period for renewing rural labours after

Christmas. It is still observed in many parts of England, where they go from door to door begging plough-money, which they expend in the evening in merriment and feasting as a farewell holiday. Shrove Tuesday is derived from the Saxon, to shrive or confess, as, in the Romish church, confession was enjoined by every communicant; after which, they were allowed to indulge in festive amusements, with a strict injunction to refrain from flesh. Hence arose the custom of eating pancakes or unleavened bread on this day, which is still kept up. Ash Wednesday was so called from a custom in the ancient Church, for penitents to appear before the bishops, clad in sackcloth, with naked feet; the priest would then put consecrated ashes of palms on their heads, emblematic of man's mortality: they were then subjected to punishment according to the extent of their transgressions, and afterwards admonished as to their future conduct. Maundy Thursday had its origin from the Saxon maund, meaning a hand-basket, as being the day on which provisions are given to the poor. A custom still prevails in England, where the Lord Almoner, after having attended divine service, bestows the royal bounty (which is clothes, beef, and bread, a sovereign, and as many silver pennies to each as the monarch has numbered years.) Good Friday is so well known that any explanation may be considered unnecessary. The day of the crucifixion of the Saviour of the world, used to be called Holy Friday, and the week, Passion Week. Hot cross buns are eaten on this day, and in some places, people are so superstitious, that they preserve them from year to year, as an infallible remedy for every disease. Holiday Saturday originated with the Saxons, who, with their families, devoted the Saturday afternoon to prayer, from its being the vigil or eve of the sabbath. Palm Sunday, is the Sunday before Easter, and was so called from Christ's entry into Jerusalem, when



the multitudes who came to the Passover, strewed branches of palms and other trees before him, with acclamations and hosannas. The practice of carrying palms, flowers, &c. is still observed in popish countries.

Q. Whence have the days of the week their derivation?

A. From the Saxon idolaters. They had seven deities more particularly adored than the rest, viz.—the Sun, the Moon, Tuisco, Woden, Thor, Friga, and Seater. Sunday being dedicated to the Sun; was called by them *Sunandaeg*; his idol represented the bust of a man, with the face darting bright rays, holding a wheel before his breast, indicative of the circuit of the golden orb around our sphere. Monday was dedicated to the Moon, and was described by a female on a pedestal, with a very singular dress, and two long ears. Tuesday was consecrated to Tuisco, a German hero, sire of the Germans, Scythians, and Saxons; he was described as a venerable old man, with a long white beard, a sceptre in his hand, and the skin of a wild boar thrown over his shoulders. Wednesday was consecrated to Woden, or Odin, a supreme god of the northern nations, father of the gods, god of war, or Mars; he was represented as a warrior in a bold martial attitude, clad in armour, holding in his right hand a broad crooked sword, and a shield in his left. Thursday was consecrated to Thor, eldest son of Woden, who was the Roman Jupiter; he was believed to govern the air, preside over lightning and thunder, direct the winds, rain, and seasons: he was represented as sitting on a splendid throne, with a crown of gold, adorned with twelve glittering stars, and a sceptre in his right hand. Friday or Friga, Hertha or Edith, was the mother of the gods, and wife of Woden; she was the goddess of love and pleasure, and was pourtrayed as a female, with a naked sword in her right hand,

and a bow in her left, implying that in extreme cases women should fight as well as men. Saturday, or Seater, is the same as the Roman Saturnus; he was represented on a pedestal, standing on the back of a prickly fish called a perch, his head bare, with a thin meagre face; in his left hand he held a wheel, and in his right a pail of water, with fruits and flowers. The sharp fins of a fish implied that the worshippers of Seater should pass safely through every difficulty. The wheel was emblematical of their unity and freedom, and the pail of water implied that he would water the earth and make it fruitful.

Q. What are we to understand by the golden number?

A. The golden number was originally so called, in consequence of its great utility, and was generally written in letters of gold, as an indication of the value in which it was held, and is the key or guide to all the Christian festivals; shewing also the changes of the moon, and thereby how to determine the time of Easter. It commences with one, and ends with nineteen, and after a cycle of nineteen years, it will happen on the same day as when it previously began, with one.

Q. What are we to understand by Black Monday?

A. This has been applied to the Monday after a vacation, when youth returned to their respective schools; but the true origin is from Easter Monday, A. D. 1351, when Edward III. invaded France, on which day a dreadful storm of wind, rain, lightning, and hail arose. The hailstones were so prodigiously large, that they instantly killed 6,000 of his horses, and 1,000 of his best troops.

Q. What are we to understand by dog-days?

A. The explanation of the term dog-days, is those excessively hot days, from the 24th of July to the 15th of August. The ancient Romans and others



believed that the great dog, or dog-star, which then rises and sets with the sun, was the cause of the heat, and at that season they always sacrificed a brown dog to Canicula, to appease its rage.

Q. What is meant by Doomsday book ?

A. This book was composed by order of William the Conqueror, and contained a register of every estate in England, with its value, the quality of the land, and an account of all the cattle, servants, and slaves belonging to it. This monarch also introduced the ringing of the curfew bell at eight o'clock, when the English people were obliged, under the penalty of a heavy fine, to extinguish their fires and candles.

Q. What is meant by halcyon days ?

A. According to heathen mythology, Halcyon was the daughter of Æolus, (king of storms and winds) and was changed into a kingfisher ; but halcyon days are seven days previous, and seven days after the winter solstice, as the halcyon laid her eggs at this season, and the weather was unusually calm, from which the ancients considered that she had power over the winds and waves, and that she laid her eggs on the surface of the sea !

Q. Why were particular days dedicated to certain saints, as we observe in the calendar ?

A. It has been previously explained, that the heathens were highly delighted with the festivities of their gods, and were very reluctant to dispense with them ; therefore, to hasten their conversion, the early Christians, after the persecution by the Emperor Decius, substituted festivals to the saints and martyrs : hence, in order to obviate the festivals of the heathens, those of the Christian saints, &c. were introduced in their room ; such as keeping up Christmas sports instead of bacchanalia, saturnalia, &c. ; celebrating May-day with flowers instead

of florialia, &c. ; the festivals of the virgin Mary, John the Baptist, &c. instead of the usual solemnities when the sun entered the signs of the zodiac. By these means the Christians made a vast number of converts ; but it must be admitted that they could not increase the solemnity of their religion. Saint Paul strongly advised that instead of celebrating their festivals, they should devote themselves to the devout and social use of psalmody and prayer.

Q. Is not the human race divided into different classes ?

A. Yes, into four, viz. First, the white and brownish nations of Europe, West Asia, and Northern Africa, who are considered the most handsome on the globe. Second, the yellow, or olive coloured, which include the Chinese, Moguls, Calmucs, &c. Third, the copper coloured American Indians. Fourth, the jet black Negroes, and other Africans of various shades of black, having woolly hair, thick lips, flat noses, and downy skins. Fifth, the dark brown Australians on the Continent, and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Q. What are we to understand by St. George's Day, or the 23rd of April ?

A. As almost every nation had its patron, or tutelary saint, St. George was selected for that of the English nation. It was supposed that he was born of English parents, and in early life became a good Christian. He was greatly respected by the Emperor Dioclesian, who gave him the command of a legion ; but he incurred the Emperor's displeasure by the protection which he afforded the Christians in their persecutions, and after having suffered the most grievous tortures, he was beheaded at Lydda, in 290. Various legends have resulted from his extraordinary prowess, such as his combat with the dragon, to preserve a princess from being devoured. This is



typically represented on some of our current coins; and he also forms the subject for one of the orders of knighthood in England, as well as others in different parts of Europe.

Q. Why was the rose chosen as the emblem of England?

A. During the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, persons took different symbols. Those who espoused the cause of Lancaster wore a red rose, and those of York a white one. This was designated the war of roses. They originated with the descendants of Edward III. and continued till the reign of Henry VII. who, after the battle of Bosworth Field, married the daughter of Edward IV. of York, by which both houses were united; since which, the rose has remained the emblem of England.

Q. Why was the shamrock made the emblem of Ireland?

A. Various opinions are given on this subject. Some assert that the Irish people consider the shamrock, or trefoil, the best and richest fodder for cattle, and that no other country could produce it but their's. Others suppose that when St. Patrick, their patron saint, endeavoured to explain the mystery of the trinity, and being unable to contend against the superstition of the age, he had recourse to a visible image; he therefore took the shamrock and made it emblematic of the divisibility of the divinity into three distinct parts, united in one stem.

Q. Why was the thistle chosen as the emblem of Scotland?

A. The most current opinion is, that during the invasion of the Danes, it was thought an act of cowardice to attack an enemy in the dark. The invaders, availing themselves of this idea, determined to assail their opponents at night, and, to prevent a knowledge of their approach, they walked bare-

footed. One of the Danes happening, however, to tread on a very large thistle which abounds in that country, he instinctively cried out from the acute pain: this alarmed the Scots, who instantly took to their arms, and defeated the enemy with great slaughter, from which circumstance the thistle was adopted as the national emblem.

Q. Whence arose the custom of the Welsh wearing leeks on St. David's day?

A. It is stated that they are worn in honour of their tutelar saint, (St. David) who rendered them great service in their wars against the Saxons, particularly on the 1st of March, 640, when it is asserted that they gained a complete victory over them in a field of leeks; but, as their dresses very much resembled those of the enemy, each Welshman put a leek in his hat, to distinguish his friend from his foe. From this period it has been customary for every Welshman to wear a leek on St. David's day.

Q. What is to be understood by the fleur de lis, or lily flower, being placed in maps?

A. The beautiful flower called the lily, is a native of France, and is generally placed in maps to denote the northern point of the mariner's compass. It was so placed by the inventor of the compass, out of compliment to France, it being a part of the arms of the king of that country, and was also used in the embellishments of the crown itself. Edward the III. added the fleur de lis to the arms of England, but since the union with Ireland, it has given place to the shamrock.

Q. What are we to understand by the Saxon heptarchy?

A. The heptarchy included first, the kingdom of Kent, founded by Hengist. Second, Sussex, including Sussex and Surrey, founded by Ella. Third, Wessex, containing part of Cornwall, Devonshire,



Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Berkshire, founded by Cerdic. Fourth, Essex, comprising Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire, founded by Ercherswin. Fifth, Northumberland, comprising Yorkshire, Lancashire, Durham, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Northumberland, and a part of Scotland, founded by Ida. Sixth, East Angles, containing Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire, founded by Offa. Seventh, Mercia, taking in the counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Warwick, Leicester, Rutland, Northampton, Lincoln, Huntingdon, Bedford, Buckingham, Oxford, Stafford, Derby, Shropshire, Nottingham, and Cheshire, founded by Cridda.

Q. What is the form of government observed in England?

A. To elucidate this question, it is necessary to state that there are three forms of government, monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical. The first, is where the sovereign power is vested in one single person, such as the Emperor of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, &c. The second, is when the government is entrusted to, or vested in, the nobility, or a few who are privileged to exercise their power, such as in the original state of Venice, Genoa, &c. A democracy, is where the power is placed in the hands of certain rulers, chosen by the people themselves, such as in the United States, &c. Now, in Britain, these three forms are blended together, and participate in the advantages of each: this is termed a limited monarchy, the sovereigns, whether male or female, having only certain privileges granted them, and they can do nothing further without the consent of both houses of parliament: hence it is said "The king can do no wrong," which implies that his person is sacred and inviolable; that no law can reach him, and that his ministers are responsible for all acts of the crown.



Q. What is the difference between an empire and a kingdom?

A. An empire means a vast extent of territory, composed of various tribes of people; whereas a kingdom means a certain territory, more bounded, and shows a kind of unity of the nation which composes it.

Q. What particular titles have the English monarchs received?

A. Henry VIII. was the first who took the title of majesty, which is still retained by his successors. Before his reign the sovereigns were generally addressed as "My liege," or "Your grace," the latter of which was conferred on Henry IV. "Excellent grace," was given to Henry VI. "Most high and mighty prince," to Edward IV. "Highness" and sometimes "Grace," to Henry VIII.; this Henry VII. also took, but it gave way to the more honourable or lofty expression "Majesty," by which title he was addressed by Francis I. Pope Leo conferred the title of "Defender of the faith," on Henry VIII. as a compliment to his defence against Martin Luther. James I. added the epithet "Sacred," or "Most excellent majesty."

Q. Why is the eldest son of the monarch of England called "the Prince of Wales?"

A. When the Saxons made themselves masters of South Britain, most of the ancient Britons retired to Wales, where they defended themselves with the utmost bravery against the invaders, and they afterwards made many vigorous attempts to maintain their liberties against the encroachments of the kings of England. Edward I. however, subdued the whole country, and annexed it to the crown of England. Perceiving that the Welsh were not entirely reconciled to this revolution, he sent his queen to be delivered in Caernarvon castle. There she was



brought to bed of a son, whom Edward very politically styled "Prince of Wales," which title the heir to the crown of Great Britain has borne almost ever since.

Q. Which are the English bishoprics?

A. In England there are two archbishoprics, viz. Canterbury and York, and twenty-four bishoprics, (in which are included four Welsh bishoprics) viz.—London, Durham, Winchester, Bath and Wells, Rochester, Peterborough, Lincoln, St. Asaph, Bangor, Worcester, St. David's, Carlisle, Llandaff, Chester, Oxford, Gloucester and Bristol, Ely, Exeter, Lichfield and Coventry, Chichester, Ripon, Salisbury, Norwich, and Hereford. In Ireland there is one archbishopric, viz. that of Tuam, and three bishoprics, Dromore, Elphin, and Limerick. There is also the bishopric of the Isle of Sodor and Man, but the bishop does not sit in the House of Lords.

Q. What are we to understand by the Chiltern Hundreds?

A. These are certain lands in Buckinghamshire, Hertford, and Oxford, belonging to the crown, and when a member of parliament wishes to vacate his seat, he accepts the stewardship of these lands, at a salary of twenty shillings per annum; and as the English law will allow no one to hold office under the crown unless he be re-elected, the acceptance of this is made a kind of subterfuge for his resignation.

Q. What is meant by the word sky?

A. The term is applied to that region, or space, beyond the atmosphere, which surrounds our earth; or rather to that blue, beautiful, and infinite concavity which limits the powers of vision, without any obstructive body. The word itself has different meanings in different languages, such as the region of the clouds, shadow, space, the heaven, &c.; but, literally speaking, when we look up, on a clear, cloud-



less evening, and the eye wanders into unlimited space, it is imagined that we behold a vast and boundless object, beautifully studded with luminous bodies ; but this is only ideal, and the seeming object is merely the extent of our optical faculties.

Q. What is meant by a falling star ?

A. That little fiery meteor which is often witnessed on a clear evening. It is merely a small cloud, containing a sort of gaseous exhalation in its centre, which, by growing continually hot, is spontaneously kindled, and the fire runs through the cloud till the vapour is exhausted ; but being free from electric matter, no noise is occasioned by the ignition. It burns gradually, and has the appearance of a sky-rocket in the air.

Q. What is meant by the word zodiac ?

A. The zodiac is a great circle on the globe, extending about eight degrees on each side of the equator, in which the sun performs its apparent revolution, and from which it never departs. It derives its name from a Greek word signifying an animal, or, as some authors imagine, life ; because the planets were formerly supposed to have great influence on animal life. The former, however, is the most authenticated opinion, as each of the signs, in the early ages, represented some animal, Libra being incorporated with Virgo and Scorpio. The zodiac is divided into twelve portions, called signs, which signs are denominated constellations, and are descriptive of the seasons of the year, or sun's path.

Q. Had the ancient astronomers any reason for giving particular animals the preference in elucidating the signs ?

A. Yes. Aries, the first, is represented by a ram : the sun entered this sign about the 21st of March, when lambs were principally brought forth. Taurus, the bull, implied that the sun entered this



sign when calves were brought forth. Gemini, or the twins, was, originally, represented under the figure of two kids: the sun entered this sign when goats brought forth their young, generally twins at a birth. Cancer, the fourth sign, was represented by a crab, an animal which always walks sideways, or backwards, the sun being then in its most northerly declination, touching the Tropic of Cancer, and beginning to retrograde, or go back, towards the equator. Leo, the fifth sign, was portrayed by the figure of a lion, in consequence of the intense heat which prevails at this season, and which the Egyptian astronomers compared to the ferocity of the lions in the wilds of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, when it was observed they were more formidable than at any other season, and when they sought the waters of the Nile, &c. to quench their raging thirst, they were doubly ferocious and destructive. Virgo, the sixth sign, was represented by a woman holding an ear of corn in her hand, emblematic of a gleaner; the sun entered this sign about the time of harvest. Libra, or the balance, was made emblematic of a pair of scales, equally poised, indicating that the days and nights were then equal all over the world. Scorpio, the seventh sign, was displayed under the figure of a scorpion, the most venomous animal in the creation; they therefore chose this, being emblematic of the sickly season, which was, and still is, the most unhealthy portion of the year. Sagittarius, or the archer, was represented under the figure of a centaur; that is, a fabulous animal, the fore part being like that of a man holding a bow and arrow, in the act of shooting, the hind parts those of a horse; and when the sun entered this sign, the 22nd of November, the hunting season commenced. Capricornus, the goat, was very aptly chosen. The sun being then in its most southerly declination, touching the Tropic of Capricorn, begins again to ascend towards the equator, the goat being an animal which delights in



climbing up mountains, rocks, and very steep ascents. Aquarius, or the water-bearer, was represented by a man holding a pitcher, and pouring forth a constant stream of water, as it was at this period that their rainy season commenced. Pisces, the twelfth sign, was displayed under the figure of two fishes tied together, in token of their being taken, reminding people that this was the most proper season for fishing, and that the quality of the fish was better than at any other part of the year.

Q. What is the origin of the words tropics and zones?

A. Tropic is derived from a Greek word, which means turn, or conversion, as being the utmost limits of the sun's declination north or south; so that when the sun arrives at either of these points, he begins to return towards the equator. Zones are so called from a Greek word implying a girdle, being broad spaces encircling the earth. There are five of these swathes, which are named according to the different degrees of heat and cold, viz,—one torrid, two temperate, and two frigid zones.

Q. What are we to understand by Antœci, Ascii, Amphiscii, Heteroscii, Periscii, and Antipodes?

A. These words are from the Greek; the first are those who live in the same degree of longitude, and equal opposite latitudes. The Ascii are those who have no shadow at noon, which must of course be confined to those living within the torrid zone, when the sun is vertical. Amphiscii are those who live near, or on, the equator, and cast their shadows sometimes northward, and sometimes southward. Heteroscii are those whose shadows at noon are always projected one way, and which are always opposite the sun. Periscii are those whose shadows move in a circular direction quite round them, and of course must be confined to the inhabitants of the



frigid zones, where the sun does not set for a considerable time. Antipodes are those in equal opposite latitude and longitude, and whose days and nights are directly opposite to each other: thus the inhabitants of New Zealand are the antipodes to England.

Q. What is the origin and meaning of constellations?

A. On the celestial globe the stars are divided into different groups, which are called constellations, under the form or outline of some assumed animal or figure, such as the ancient astronomers supposed these groups to represent. They are still retained, for the sake of distinction, and to direct the astronomer. The word itself means an assemblage or system of several stars, and was invented by the ancient Chaldeans, Babylonians, or Assyrians, who were famous for their skill in astronomy; and it is imagined that they were the first people who reduced it to a science, from whom it was handed down to the Egyptians, from the Egyptians to the Greeks, from the Greeks to the Romans, and from the Romans to ourselves.

Q. Why are the greater part of the old churches built on high hills?

A. This, in all probability, had its origin among the Greeks, who worshipped their gods on the tops of high mountains. The nations who resided near Judea, sacrificed upon mountains, or heaven-kissing hills. Balak carried Balaam to the top of different mountains to sacrifice. Abraham offered up his son Isaac on a mountain in Moriah. In later ages temples were built on high mountains. Lofty hills were sacred to the gods, because their tops approached nearer to heaven, the supposed seat of the heathen deities; and as the primitive Christians observed the rights and customs of the heathens to a certain extent, it is very probable that they built their churches on the most elevated spots they could find.



Q. What is to be understood by the word atlas ?

A. Atlas, according to the heathen mythology, existed in the time of Moses, and was king of Mauritania, in the north of Africa, and possessed a thousand flocks of every kind ; but in consequence of his inhospitality to Perseus, he was changed into the mountain which bears his name, and from its immense height, the ancients supposed that the heavens rested on its summit, and that Atlas supported the world on his shoulders ! This fable had its origin from the fondness which he displayed for astronomy, which he generally studied on the most elevated places, where he could more distinctly observe the motions of the heavenly bodies, &c.

Q. What are we to understand by the Scylla and Charybdis, so renowned in classic history ?

A. The first was a famous rocky promontory, near the straits of Messina, between Sicily and Italy ; and the latter a whirlpool, both of which were terrible to navigators ; for unless a skilful pilot steered exactly between them, destruction of the vessel and crew was inevitable, either against the rocks of the former, or in the gulf of the latter. It is said, however, that the latter was quite removed by an earthquake, which desolated Messina, in 1783. The poetical fiction is, that Scylla was a beautiful woman, changed by the envy of Circe into a monster ; Scylla in despair threw herself into the sea, and was turned into a rock. Charybdis was a ravenous woman, changed by Jupiter into a gulph beneath the rock.

Q. By whom were the four quarters of the world peopled after the deluge ?

A. According to the best historical accounts, Noah is supposed to have peopled the vast Chinese empire ; Japheth peopled Europe, and the north-west parts of Asia ; Ham peopled Africa, and carried thither the curse of his father, Noah, which is fully



exemplified in the degraded state of this unfortunate people to the present day ; Shem peopled the southern parts of Asia. It is not known by whom America was peopled, but it is generally supposed that some of Noah's descendants emigrated thither, and spread themselves over that immense continent.

Q. What are we to understand by the four ages, viz.—the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages ?

A. These are represented by a sort of fable, taken from the celebrated dream of Nebuchadnezzar, which was interpreted by the Prophet Daniel. The head was gold, the body and arms silver, the thighs brass, and the legs iron. The golden age denotes Adam and Eve's innocence in the garden of Eden, where they had everything provided without labour ; but according to the mythologists, the time when the earth flourished with perpetual spring, and no storms, clouds, &c. were known—when all was concord and harmony ; war, disease, care, punishment, or want, were entirely unknown, and when sin had no existence. The silver age, in scriptural language, shows the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve, which were labour and sorrow ; but in mythological language, it implies that Saturn, the god of time, reigned more agreeably than Jupiter, and that this age, though inferior to the golden, was preferable to the brazen and iron, which succeeded it ; changes of seasons were then experienced, and the earth ceased to bring forth its fruits spontaneously, man becoming more prone to vice, and art was absolutely necessary to supply the deficiency of nature. The brazen age denotes the corruption and wickedness of mankind, which arrived at such a height, that the Almighty determined to destroy the world by a flood, when only Noah and his family were saved ; mythologically expressed, avarice appeared, the world was ransacked for wealth, and the remotest regions resorted to in the hope of gain. Here also, the



prophecy of Daniel was fully accomplished ; for the Greeks, who wore armour of brass, conquered and overran the greater part of the habitable world. The iron age means the wars which were perpetually carried on among mankind, when violence, oppression, war, rapine, and every species of crime spread over the earth ; but it metaphorically alluded to that period when the Romans spread their conquests over an indefinite portion of the globe, and wore armour of iron.

Q. What is meant by the seven wonders of the world ?

A. Some stupendous works of art, executed by the ancients. The first was a colossal statue of brass at Rhodes, which was dedicated to the sun. It was twelve years in making, and cost 300 talents (or about £97,000 of our money.) It was seventy cubits in height, and stood directly across the harbour. Its thumbs were so large, that a man could not clasp one of them with both his arms, and its legs were spread out to such a distance, that ships of large size could sail between them ! In its left hand it held a light-house, for the direction of mariners ; and in its right, a dart, apparently ready to be discharged at any intruder. Fifty years after its erection, it was thrown down by an earthquake, and about nine centuries subsequently, the old metal was purchased by a Jew, who loaded 900 camels with it. Second : The Pyramids of Egypt, three of which still remain, remarkable for their height. The first has a square base, 660 feet each way, and is 500 feet high. It is made of great stones, the least of which is thirty feet in height. It took 360,000 men twenty years to complete it ! The other two are a little smaller, and attract the admiration of the spectator. Some suppose that they were built by the Israelites, during their captivity ; but this opinion cannot be correct, as we read that they were employed in



making bricks. Third: The walls of the city of Babylon (which was the capital of Chaldea) built by Queen Semiramis. They formed an exact square, were sixty miles in circumference, 200 feet in height, and fifty in breadth, so that six chariots could travel upon them abreast. Fourth: The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, which was a work of the greatest magnificence. The riches within were immense; and the goddess was worshipped with great solemnity. It took 220 years in its completion, *though all Asia was employed!* It was supported by 127 pillars of beautiful Parian marble, each of a single shaft, and raised by as many KINGS. Each pillar was sixty feet in height, thirty-seven of them being engraven. The beams and doors were made of cedar, and the rest of the timber was cypress. The image of the goddess was made of ebony: it was burnt by Erostratus, an obscure individual, 110 years after, on the same day that Alexander the Great was born. Fifth: The royal palace of Cyrus, King of Media. It was built by Memnon, who was as prodigal in expense as he was skilful in building. It is asserted that he actually cemented the stones with gold! Some are inclined to give the preference to the temple of Solomon, at Jerusalem, as a superior edifice. Sixth: The statue of Jupiter Olympus, in the city of Olympia. It was of a prodigious size, made of ivory, and carved with the greatest art by Phidias, a noted sculptor. Seventh: The mausoleum, or supulchre of Mausolus, King of Caria, built by his queen, Artemisia, of the most beautiful marble. The workmanship was splendid in the extreme; it was sixty-three feet in length, 400 in circumference, and thirty-five in height, surrounded by thirty-six columns of the most superb workmanship. This has been acknowledged by some, as one of the seven wonders, whilst others think that the light-house of Alexandria ought to have the preference. This was



a tower of white marble, nearly 400 feet in height, with magnificent galleries, and mirrors of enormous size. On the top was an immense lantern, with a light constantly burning, so that ships could perceive it at the distance of a hundred miles.

Q. What are we to understand by those large conical mounds, &c. called barrows, which we meet with in different counties ?

A. It is generally supposed that these hillocks, or mounds, were the repositories for the dead, during the time that the Romans, Saxons, &c. held the sovereignty of England ; for, on being dug into, they have been found to contain calcined earth, burnt bones, ashes, &c. In some of them, entire stone coffins, containing skeletons, have been found ; but these in general are too short to admit a full-length body. The skeletons, therefore, lay with the legs doubled up, and the knees pressed on the breast. Many curiosities, such as coins, warlike instruments, urns, armour, &c. have also been dug from them.

Q. What is understood by the Goodwin Sands, so dangerous to mariners ?

A. These sands were formed by an inundation of the sea in 1100, and are traditionally supposed to have been part of the domains of Godwin, Earl of Kent, and father of Harold. They are situated opposite the Isle of Thanet, in Kent, and run along the coast between the north and south Forelands for about ten miles.

Q. What are we to understand by the Cinque Ports ?

A. The word cinque is derived from the French, meaning five. They were originally instituted and incorporated by William the Conqueror, who granted them many privileges, conditionally, that they would, in time of war, furnish him with ships well manned and armed, free of expense. They were Dover,



Hastings, Romney, Hythe, and Sandwich ; but subsequently Rye, Seaford, and Winchelsea were included with the former.

Q. Why were the Pacific and Atlantic oceans so called ?

A. The Pacific ocean was so named by Magellan, the great navigator, after he passed through the dangerous straits which bear his name. He sailed nearly four months towards the north-west, without discovering land, and suffered the greatest distress in his voyage before he discovered the Ladrone Islands ; but he enjoyed such delightful weather during the whole time, and such favourable winds, that he called this ocean the Pacific, which name it still retains. The Atlantic ocean is so called from the Atlas mountains in Africa, and the mythological account of Atlas carrying the world on his back.

Q. Why are those rocks west of Pembrokeshire called the Bishop and his Clerks ?

A. They were so called from an incident which occurred many years ago, viz.—Some merchant ships coming from Spain were wrecked there ; and it happened that a man, called Miles Bishop, with two others, named Clarke, were the only persons saved, by their clinging fast to the fragment of a mast. Hence the term “the Bishop and his Clerks.”

Q. How do people calculate what weather is likely to follow when the wind sets in any particular point ?

A. When the wind sets in the north, we have a right to expect cold weather, as it blows from the north frozen zone, or colder countries than ours, without much sea. The south wind is generally attended with heat, because it comes to us from the torrid zone, or hotter countries than ours. The east wind is the driest, because it comes over the great continent of Asia and Europe, where there are few

seas. The west wind is generally attended with rain, because it blows over the great Atlantic ocean, whence a great quantity of vapours rise.

Q. Why is it said that if it rain on St. Swithin's day, we may expect rain for forty days following?

A. St. Swithin, or Swithum, was a bishop of Winchester, who died in 868. Being a wise man and good Christian, he was not ambitious of the vain distinction of being buried in the chancel of the minster, but wished to be laid where the rain of heaven might wet his grave. He was accordingly interred in the minster yard; but the monks, who were more worldly-minded, resolved to remove the body into the choir of the church. This was to have been done on the 15th of July, but it rained then, and for forty days after, so violently, that they abandoned the design. Hence the expression, that if it rain on St. Swithin's day, it will rain for forty days after successively.

Q. What is the difference between an attorney and a solicitor?

A. Attornies are gentlemen who are sworn into the several courts of law, and are authorized to act either for plaintiff or defendant; these are often called solicitors; but, properly speaking, a solicitor is an attorney who practises in chancery cases.

Q. How are the officers of the army ranked?

A. First: The general, who is the commander-in-chief of a regiment: the lieutenant-general, who is next in place to the general: the major-general acts or commands under the orders of the general or lieutenant-general: a brigadier is an officer who commands a brigade, or a body of several battalions of foot, or several squadrons of horse: a colonel is the second officer in the regiment, and commands in the absence of the general: a major is an officer who conveys all orders to the regiment, and divides them



among the sergeants of the company : an aid-de-camp is an officer who attends the general to receive his orders, and carry them as directed : a captain is the commander and chief of a body of foot, or a troop of horse or dragoons : a lieutenant is next in command to a captain, and does his duty when absent : a cornet is the third officer in a troop of horse or dragoons : an ensign is the third officer in a company of foot soldiers, and carries the flag or colours : a quarter-master has to look out for the accommodation of the men. The inferior officers, as sergeants, corporals, &c. need no explanation.

Q. Why are foot soldiers called infantry ?

A. One of the monarchs of Spain being once defeated by the Moors, his daughter assembled a body of foot soldiers, followed the enemy, and totally overthrew them. In honour of this event, they received the title of infantry, as the Spanish princesses are called Infantas.

Q. In using the word "arms," what are we to understand by arms, crests, hatchments, &c. ?

A. Coats of arms were known in the time of Richard I. and hereditary in families about 1192, although some trace it higher, and think that it originated with the primitive people painting their bodies with various figures, to distinguish them from each other. In the time of the crusades, the knights painted their banners with different figures, for better recognition. The lions in the English arms were originally leopards, as found in an old record of 1252. Formerly none but the nobility bore arms ; but the French monarch, Charles XV. having ennobled some Parisians in the 13th century, the custom was adopted by other nations. Crest implies the most elevated part of the head armour, and took its origin from *crista*, a cock's-comb, the cock being an emblematic figure of undaunted bravery. Hatch-

ment is derived from achievement, a coat-armour usually affixed to the front of a house on the death of its owner, to acquaint us with his rank, &c.

Q. Whence have the various instruments of war their names?

A. It is not generally known that most warlike instruments took their names from the places where they were made: thus, bayonets were invented at Bayonne, in France; pistol from Pistoya, a city of Tuscany; chevaux-de-frise, (*a Frieseland horse*,) is derived from Frieseland, where it was invented. A sword is often called a Toledo, from Toledo, in Spain, which has been long famous for sword blades. Bilboa also implies a rapier, or sword, because at Bilboa, in Spain, instruments of steel were in the highest perfection. A broad sword took the name of Ferrara, from Ferrara, in Italy, or from Andrea de Ferrara, a celebrated artificer of that place, who served the Scotch highlanders with their sword-blades.

Q. By whom were bows and arrows invented?

A. It is very evident that they were of very ancient use, as we read of them in the book of Genesis. But the bow was brought into this country by the Anglo-Saxons and Danes. The cross-bow was introduced by the Normans.



## THEOLOGICAL.

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Q. "God is in everything" is a common expression : how is this proved ?

A. By the word Jehovah, which combines the five vowels a, e, i, o, u, or Je o va, the letter V being formerly used for U, and J for I. By the word Jehovah is understood the ineffable name of God, or his divine essence. It was held so sacred by the Hebrews, that they would never read it when they came to it in any writing, but instead thereof, they pronounced the word "Adonai," which signifies Lord.

Q. What is meant by the Jewish divisions of time, as watches, &c. ?

A. The Jews adopted a plan of subdividing time into four vigils, or watches, which was, in some degree, practised by the Romans. The first began at sunrise, or six in the morning ; the second at nine ; the third at noon ; and the fourth at three in the afternoon. The night watches, also, were observed in every three successive hours. The Greeks reckoned their first quarter from sunset to midnight ; the second, from midnight to sunrise ; the third, or morning watch, from sunrise to noon ; and the fourth from noon to sunset. The Romans, however, had their watches from midnight to cock-crowing ; from cock-crowing to dawn ; from dawn to mid-day ; thence to vesper, or evening twilight, and thence to midnight.

Q. In speaking of the Jewish sacrifices, what is meant by burnt offerings?

A. It would be too prolix to go into the origin of sacrifices, but we may class them under two heads, the bloody and unbloody offerings, the first of which were divided into three sorts: first, whole burnt offerings; second, sin, or trespass offerings; third, peace offerings. A whole burnt offering was the most excellent, since it was all consecrated to God, the victim being wholly consumed upon the altar; and this was the most ancient, having been offered by Noah, Abraham, and other patriarchs, and the ceremonies were numerous and varied. There were five sorts of animals offered, viz.—oxen, sheep, goats, pigeons, and turtle doves, care being taken to choose those free from blemish. Unbloody offerings, which were termed meat offerings, consisted of wheat, bread, ears of corn, and parched grain, with libations of wine, mixed with oil and frankincense. There was also a quantity of flour, wine, and oil, with every animal that was sacrificed, the wine being poured on the brow of the animal, to consecrate it.

Q. What is the feast of the Passover?

A. It is one of the principal and most solemn festivals of the Jews, in commemoration of their miraculous deliverance, when the Almighty smote the first-born of the Egyptians, and their escape from bondage. It lasts eight days, during which they carefully abstain from all fermented liquors, and eat unleavened bread, or cakes made of flour and water; but the wealthy add eggs and sugar, similar to our pancakes, &c.

Q. What was the feast of tabernacles?

A. A Jewish festival, of eight days continuance, in the seventh month, which corresponds with our October, during which time they left their habitations, and dwelt in booths, or tents, in commemora-



tion of their dwelling forty years in tabernacles in the wilderness. This feast was kept up with great rejoicings; at the close of their vintage and harvest they carried in their hands branches of palm, olive, willow, and myrtle, tied with gold and silver cords; and once every day they went round the altar of the temple, crying "Hosanna! O Lord, send us prosperity." The priest then went to the pool of Siloam, and filled a golden vessel with water, which he mixed with wine, and poured on the altar as a libation, the people singing "With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation."

Q. Had the Jews many of these festivals?

A. Yes. They had, besides those already described, their feasts of new moon, of trumpets, of Pentecost, of dedication, and others, all of which are of a religious character, (a description of which would occupy too much space in this work) and were celebrated in order to keep up friendship and unity among the different tribes.

Q. Who were the Pharisees?

A. The Pharisees derive their name from pharas, a Hebrew word, which signifies separation, because they separated themselves from their Jewish brethren, and affected a higher degree of holiness, in consequence of which they were revered by the lower classes. The title was mostly applied to the rich and independent, those of the lower grade being termed the multitude, the people, &c. Their religion consisted principally in the observance of external ceremonies, oblations, and purifications: they fasted often, and made long prayers in public places; they were such strict observers of the Sabbath, that they considered it wicked to heal the sick on that day. They believed in the resurrection, and in the existence of angels and spirits; but by the former they meant the transmigration of the souls of good men



into other bodies. They dressed very splendidly, and wore large and long fringes on their garments.

Q. Who were the Sadducees mentioned in the New Testament?

A. The most ancient sect among the Jews, who separated themselves from their brethren, and their founder was Zadoc, who considered that there would be no future punishment, although he admitted that there was a God, who made the world, and governed it by his providence; but that rewards or punishments were applicable to the present life, for which purpose he enjoined the worship of the Deity, and obedience to his laws. His disciples rejected all the Scriptures except the Pentateuch. They would not believe in the existence of angels, spirits, or the resurrection. They were few in number, but eminent for wealth and dignity.

Q. How is it that the original Sabbath is changed from the seventh to the first day of the week?

A. The Christian Sabbath is held on the first day of the week, in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his followers believing that the laws and ceremonies instituted by Moses, and observed under the Mosaic law, were, to a certain extent, abolished at the transfiguration on the mount, when Moses and Elias appeared to hold conversation with him, and, as we believe, acknowledged his divinity, and resigned their laws and customs to him.

Q. What is meant by the words Candlemas, Michaelmas, Lammas, and Martinmas?

A. Candlemas was a term so called from the abundance of consecrated candles formerly used on the 2nd of February (or purification of the virgin Mary) by the primitive Christians in their processions. This custom was prohibited by Edward VI. but is still observed by the Catholics. Michaelmas, in the Romish calendar, was observed from the dedi-



cation of a church to St. Michael the arch, or chief angel; but, by the Christians, from a number of churches built on high hills, being dedicated to that Saint, particularly in Cornwall, of which St. Michael's Mount is an illustrative example. It is also one of the quarter days (September 29th) for the payment of rents, &c. in England. Lammas (1st of August) signifies lamb mass, there being formerly a custom among persons who held lands of the cathedral of York, to bring a lamb alive on this day into the church, or on high mass: hence lamb mass. Other authors think it takes its origin from the Saxon loaf mass, or loaf of bread mass, an offering of thanks made from the first new wheat, about the 1st of August, in gratitude for an abundant harvest. A custom was also observed by the tenants, to bring wheat to their lord of the current year's growth on this day. Martinmas, (11th November) from Martin and mass. St. Martin was bishop of Tours in the fourth century, and was styled the wise and good man. The Martinalia was an ancient genial festival; wines were then tasted, and cleanly racked from the lees, and the vinalia was removed to this day. St. Martin was hence made typical of Bacchus, the god of wine.

Q. What is meant by the word Easter?

A. It was so called from Eastre, the goddess of the east, a Saxon deity, who was worshipped with great solemnity in the month of April. The Hebrews termed it *pasach*, which means to skip, or pass over: hence the feast of the Passover among the Jews. Others think it originated with the Saxon *to rise*, expressive of the resurrection of Christ. It was anciently called the great day, feast, or queen of feasts, as it governed all the other moveable feasts. Easter-day is the first Sunday following the first full moon after the 21st of March, and was so ordered by the Council of Nice, in 325. There was, originally, a custom of beating and stoning Jews on this day.



Q. What is the origin of Whitsunday ?

A. This corresponds with the Jewish feast of Pentecost, so called from being celebrated fifty days after the Passover. The Christians called it whit, or whitesunday, as being the day on which their converts should dress in pure white to receive the sacrament. It is also kept in commemoration of the visible appearance of cloven tongues, which rested on the apostles, and by which they were endued with miraculous power.

Q. What is meant by the Epiphany and Ember weeks ?

A. Epiphany means an appearance of great light, a festival celebrated twelve days after Christmas, as our Saviour was manifested to the Gentiles by a miraculous blazing star. Ember weeks are those four seasons set apart for public ordinations, particularly for prayer and fasting, viz.—the first week in Lent, the next after Whitsunday, the 24th of September, and 13th of December. They were so called from a custom among the primitive Christians of putting ashes on their heads, in token of humiliation.

Q. What are we to understand by the word Gospel ?

A. The word is of Saxon origin, in which language it implies a good word, good tidings, or good news ; the last two are very nearly applicable to the Greek term evangelion, which means good tidings.

Q. Why did the eastern Magi present gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to the Saviour ?

A. The offering of gold implied that he was of man's nature, and that he would be a king. Frankincense and myrrh were used in the embalming of bodies, in all the eastern countries where the inhabitants preserved their dead from putrefaction, and by presenting these ingredients, it showed their belief



that he would die, and that his body would be embalmed. Frankincense is a sweet-scented gum; but myrrh is a gum of greater value, and was usually mixed with aloes, a costly wood, the best sort of which was then more valuable than gold.

Q. Who were the Evangelists, and what was their fate?

A. First: St. Matthew, whose original name was Levi, was a Jew of the tribe of Issachar; he was a publican, or tax-gatherer, and was called by the Saviour to follow him whilst sitting at the receipt of customs. He preached the gospel throughout Judea, and whilst employed in this pious cause in Ethiopia, he was slain with a halbert. Second: St. Mark, whose original name was Mordecai, was also of Jewish parents, and was converted to Christianity by some of the apostles. He preached the gospel principally in Egypt; and whilst the Egyptians were employed in their heathen solemnities, they broke in upon the holy man, who was worshipping his God, bound his feet with cords, and dragged him through the streets till he died. Third: St. Luke was supposed to have been a physician, also an eminent painter, and was converted to the Christian faith by St. Paul, with whom he preached the gospel, but was seized at Patras, in Achaia, by a party of infidels, who hung him to an olive tree, in the 84th year of his age. Fourth: St. John was a disciple of Christ, and spread the gospel through western Asia. He addressed himself to the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelations, and converted thousands to Christianity. By order of Domitian, the Roman Emperor, he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he came out, not only unhurt, but greatly refreshed! after which he was banished to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelations. He died a natural death at Ephesus, in the 94th year of his age.



**Q.** Describe the twelve apostles, and the mode of their deaths.

**A.** First: Simon Peter was a fisherman in Galilee, and became a disciple of Christ, in consequence of the miraculous draught of fishes. By order of the cruel Nero, he was crucified with his head downwards, on the top of Mount Vatican. Second: St. Andrew was the younger brother of St. Peter, and was first a disciple of John the Baptist. He preached the gospel through Scythia, and was crucified at Patræ, being at first scourged, and then fastened to a cross in the form of the letter X, with cords instead of nails, in which state of agony he remained two days. Hence the letter X is called St. Andrew's cross. Third: St. James, son of Zebedee, a fisherman, was condemned to death by Herod; the principal witness against him was overcome by remorse, and embraced Christianity, when he was immediately decapitated with St. James. Fourth: St. John, his brother, is described with the Evangelists. (p. 71.) Fifth: Philip was also a fisherman, and preached the gospel at Upper Asia, and having exasperated the magistrates by destroying a large dragon which they worshipped, he was publicly scourged, and afterwards hung by the neck to a pillar till he died. Sixth: St. James was, it is asserted, the son of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ, by a former wife; and, whilst preaching at Jerusalem, was pushed headlong from the eminence on which he stood, and then stoned; but his death blow was from the club of one Simon, a fuller. Seventh: St. Bartholomew was also called Nathaniel, and was a fisherman. This holy man was seized whilst preaching in Armenia, and either crucified with his head downwards, or, more probably, flayed alive, as this custom prevailed in the east. Eighth: St. Thomas was a fisherman of Galilee, and was termed, at one time, the incredulous disciple. He



preached through India, and whilst engaged at his devotions, was stoned by order of the Brahmins, and then pierced with a lance. Ninth : St. Matthew has been described as one of the evangelists. Tenth and eleventh : St. Simon and St. Jude, or Thaddeus, suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, in Persia, where they preached the gospel. Twelfth : Judas Iscariot destroyed himself, after having betrayed his Lord and master to the Jews for thirty pieces of silver.

Q. Why were the articles of the Christian faith originally called the Apostles' creed ?

A. According to the account given by St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, the composer of that beautiful portion of our Liturgy, entitled "Te Deum Laudamus," it was written by the twelve apostles, before they set out on their mission of Christianity, as a key to their common opinion. Other writers assert that each apostle composed one article, in the following order:—St. Peter gave us the first—I believe in God, the Father Almighty. St. John, 2nd—Maker of heaven and earth. James, 3rd—And in Jesus Christ, his only son Son our Lord. Andrew, 4th—Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Philip, 5th—Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. Thomas, 6th—He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead. Bartholomew, 7th—He ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Matthew, 8th—From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. James, son of Alpheus, 9th—I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church. Simon, 10th—The communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins. Jude, brother of James, 11th—The resurrection of the body. Matthias, 12th—And the life everlasting. Amen.

Q. Why do people usually turn to the east when the creeds are read in churches ?

A. The east, in scriptural language, was, symbolically considered, the more immediate residence of the Almighty, and has been emphatically alluded to in every age, although turning to the east savours, in some degree, of Catholicism, and even in the present day is one of the rites of that religion. The sun, the glorious attribute of the Deity, rises in the east. The prophets of old always turned their faces to the east when engaged in their devotions. A brilliant star appeared in the east at the birth of the Messiah. Balaam, Cyrus, and the eastern Magi came from the east. It may be considered merely a sort of devotional piety, commanded to be observed by the canon law. The Christian churches were anciently built due east and west; and in the early period of Christianity it was usual in Poland, Lithuania, and many other countries, when the creeds were read, for the nobility to rise up and stand facing the east, with their swords drawn, thereby intimating that they were ready, if necessary, to seal the truth of their belief with their blood and life.

Q. Is there anything remarkable in the death of the cross?

A. The ancient Jews, and other eastern nations, considered the death of the cross the most dreadful that could be inflicted, both for disgrace and torture, and was so execrable, that it was inflicted only as a mark of detestation on the vilest people. Moses himself commanded that a person executed in this way should not remain on the cross after sunset, he being utterly despised by man, and accursed by God. The cross itself has, however, been a subject of adoration in the ancient church, and is still worshipped by Roman Catholics.

Q. Did not the early Christians show their disgust at the name of Judas?

A. So lately as the fifteenth century, it was a



custom in churches, when the name of Judas was used in the Liturgy, for the congregation to smite on their breasts ; and when that of the devil, or satan, was first used, the people began to spit, and continued to do so on the repetition of the word.

Q. What is meant by the scriptural expression "They gave him vinegar to drink?"

A. In some countries, particularly in the West Indies, people are obliged to use a great deal of vinegar ; and the Roman soldiers used to take it in their marches. People in the east used to dip their bread in it, and eat it as one of their chief articles of refreshment : this custom still prevails in France and Italy. It is supposed that when the Roman soldier offered it to the Saviour, it was some which he used for his own drinking : there was a sort, however, which was too potent for use until diluted. In some countries they mix oil with it, particularly in Algiers, where they even indulge their miserable captives with a small portion of oil to the vinegar, which they allow with their bread.

Q. What is meant by the scriptural expression, "Gird up your loins?"

A. The eastern nations, among whom the scriptures were first propagated, dressed very differently from the present age, although nearly every nation has its peculiar costume. The ancient Jews and others, wore their garments very long, large, and loose, both for elegance and convenience. The climate of the country being extremely hot by day, and very cold at night, they usually slept without undressing. The upper garment was at least six yards in length, and five in breadth, which of course must have been very troublesome to the traveller ; he was, therefore, obliged to tuck it up, and fold it round him by means of a girdle fastened round the waist or loins. Hence the expression "Gird up your loins," &c.

Q. What is meant by the words Rubric and Liturgy?

A. By Rubric is meant certain directions, given at the commencement, or in the course of the Liturgy, to point out how the several parts of the church service should be performed. It derives its name from the Latin *rubrica*, red, as the directions were formerly written or printed with red ink, to distinguish them from the other parts. Liturgy means the forms of prayer, or ceremonies, used in public worship in the Church of England. In the Roman church it means mass, but with us common prayer.

Q. What is the origin of the word sacrament?

A. This word, although used to denote the most solemn of Christian institutions, is of heathen origin, and anciently signified the oath taken by the Roman soldiers, when they enrolled themselves under the banners of their leaders. Hence it came to be used for that solemn service of the church, by which Christians pledge themselves to be faithful to the great captain of their salvation.

Q. What is the meaning of the ceremony of churching of women?

A. This, like many other Christian ceremonies, took its rise from the Jewish rite of purification, ordered by the law of Moses. Among the Greeks, the period was limited to forty days after a birth, but in western Europe no time is observed. Being a portion of our Liturgy, it is observed as a mode of thanksgiving, and practised in every Christian country, generally within a month after childbirth.

Q. What is the origin of baptism?

A. Some authors are inclined to think that it was instituted immediately after the deluge, in memory of the world having been purged by water. Others



consider that it was added to the Jewish custom of circumcision, as a mark of distinction among the sceptical Jews; indeed, it is well known that they practised this ceremony long before the time of Christ. The real meaning of the word is dipping or plunging; and in the eastern churches children are regularly immersed in water. In Milan the head of the child is plunged three times into the water, emblematic of the triune godhead, or of the Saviour lying three days in the grave. It was formerly supposed that baptism washed away all the previous sins, and that as adults only were to be admitted to this ceremony, there was no atonement for sins subsequently committed, in consequence of which many deferred this ceremony to the latest period of their existence.

Q. What is the origin of confirmation?

A. This appears to have descended from the apostles themselves, and founded on their example and practice. In the early ages of Christianity, it was observed immediately after baptism, if the bishop happened to be present. This is still continued among the Greeks, and throughout the eastern churches: but the Catholics make it a distinct sacrament, after a person has attained the age of seven years. In England, however, no particular age is insisted on; but the clergy are scrupulous of admitting persons to this ceremony under the age of fourteen.

Q. What is the origin of wakes, vigils, or festivals?

A. They were originally instituted on the days of dedication of the churches, or on those saints' days to whom these edifices were devoted, and commenced on the evenings preceding those days. They must have been of early origin, as St. John alluded to them. (See chap. x. ver. 22.)

Q. What is meant by Low-Sunday?

A. This was the first Sunday after Easter. It is likewise styled Quasimodo Sunday, from the commencement of the hymn for mass on that day, and as the ceremonies and services were of a lower degree, and less pompous than at Easter, it received the title of Low Sunday.

Q. What is there remarkable with regard to Innocents' day?

A. It was supposed by the early Christians that no work would prosper if begun on Childermas, or Innocents' day, or that day of the week in which it happened. Children were flogged or whipped by their parents, in bed, on the morning of this festival, in order that the memory of Herod's massacre of the innocents might be remembered more strongly; and processions of children walked through the streets, and recited verses in commemoration of the event.

Q. What is meant by the words cherubim and seraphim?

A. These words, used in that part of the church service commonly called "Te Deum," are derived from the Hebrew, and imply knowledge and flame. It is generally supposed by the ancients, that cherubim means a portion of the angels who possess a superior knowledge of the Almighty, and that seraphim, or flame, are those who excel in their love to him.

Q. Why do men appear uncovered, and women covered, in Christian congregations?

A. It has been an eastern custom, from time immemorial, for females to wear veils closely attached to their faces, it being considered very immodest for them to exhibit their features. This custom is observed in the present day. St. Paul alluded to it in his epistles, and condemned the women at Corinth for being in the house of God with their heads un-



covered : he also directed their attention to the preservation of their hair, as being one of their greatest ornaments ; and we find that in all ages, and almost every country, the females endeavour to promote its growth, and set it off to the greatest advantage. Men, on the contrary, except the sect called Quakers, consider the uncovering the head a mark of solemn reverence and respect.

Q. What are we to understand by the term “benefit of clergy?”

A. This term is often repeated by persons who do not understand its meaning. It was, originally, meant to exempt a clergyman from being tried for any offence by any laical judges ; and even if he had committed any extraordinary crime, his punishment was lighter than death. But in the dark age of ignorance and superstition, this indulgence was extended to any person who could read, by which the Monks acquired large sums of money, in artfully teaching criminals to read, and thus screening them from criminal punishments : but this opened a road to murder, rape, and other crimes, there being no bounds to ecclesiastical licentiousness. This was partially repressed by Edward III. ; and Edward VI. decreed that no person guilty of manslaughter, except a peer of the realm, or a priest in holy orders, should claim the benefit of clergy.

Q. What are we to understand by the word eternity ?

A. We cannot understand anything about it, as it is far beyond human comprehension. A finite being cannot comprehend infinity ; and as the faculties and powers of man are limited, he can no more describe the word, than he can ascertain the mysteries, designs, and intentions of Providence. This word is so indefinite, that it is mentioned but once in the Bible, viz.—by the prophet Isaiah,

chapter lvii. verse 15. It was once asked, "Suppose the whole globe were converted into a mass of sand, and one grain of it exhausted every thousand years, in what space of time would the whole be annihilated?" The answer was, *never*, which last word is as far above our comprehension, as eternity itself.

Q. Why is the word Amen used after every prayer?

A. This word, so often used in scripture, has not always the same signification. In the Hebrew it means true, faithful, certain; but at the end of a prayer it implies so be it; or, so let it be. At the end of a creed, so it is. It has been generally used by Jews and Christians at the conclusion of prayer.



## PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS.

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Q. Whence had the term John O'Groat's house its origin?

A. Duncan's Head, in Caithnessshire, is the most northerly part of Britain, and a man named John O'Groat caused a house to be erected there. This house became famous for its situation, and from being built by three brothers, who came from Holland, each of whom, at first, had an equal share in the house and premises; but, in process of time, their families multiplied, and there were no less than eight proprietors of the name of Groat, all of whom met at an anniversary dinner, which, for some years, was amicably celebrated; but afterwards a dispute arose which should first enter the door, and sit at the head of the table, when old John interposed, and built a room of an octagonal shape, with eight doors, and made a table with eight corners. At the next anniversary he made each enter by a separate door, and take his seat at one part of the table, which put an end to their domestic squabbles.

Q. Whence is the origin of the phrase "how do you do?"

A. This phrase is principally confined to the English, and is a very absurd question when taken literally, as it implies how does your business answer? or, what are you busy about? and may be answered I am doing well, or, I am busy writing, instead of telling how your health is! The Dutch say—How

do you sail? This arose from their being originally fishermen, or sailors ; and instead of—Good morning, they say, May you eat a good dinner! The Chinese salutation is—Have you eaten your rice? which is a proper expression in a country where the poorer classes are in a state of starvation. In some parts of Egypt they say—How do you sweat? This also is a proper question where the climate is very hot, and where profuse perspiration is the great promoter of health.

Q. Whence arose the idea that it is unlucky to spill salt at table?

A. This took its rise from one of the original paintings (in the Italian school) of the last supper, in which Judas Iscariot is represented as having knocked over a saltcellar. This superstitious idea is still so prevalent, that when persons spill salt, they take a portion of it and throw over the left shoulder, for which custom no reason is assigned.

Q. What is to be understood by “take Time by the forelock?”

A. In heathen mythology the painters represented Time under the figure of a man, holding a scythe in one hand, and an hour glass in the other: he is quite bald, except at one little spot in the forehead, where there is a small tuft of hair. Hence, in order to prosper in the world, and lose no time in frivolous pursuits, we are enjoined to take Time by the forelock.

Q. Whence arose the exclamation of “O yes!” by the public crier?

A. This is derived from the French word *oyez*, which signifies hear ye, or listen, and was originally adopted to command attention and silence, particularly in a court of justice.

Q. What is meant by the words “as hard as adamant?”



A. The hardest gem, or stone, that has ever been discovered is the diamond, which the ancients called adamant, from whence arose the observation, as hard as adamant. The diamond has also the singular property that it can only be cut by its own substance.

Q. Whence arose the expression "under the rose?"

A. Roses were not known in England till the early part of the fifteenth century, when they were brought from Italy, and planted in these parts. As the Catholic religion then predominated, they were consecrated as presents from the Pope of Rome, and were placed over the heads of those who came to confess, as symbols of secrecy. Hence the phrase of under the rose.

Q. What is meant by the phrase "rob Peter to pay Paul?"

A. This arose in the reign of Edward VI. when some lands of St. Peter, at Westminster, were invaded by the great men of the court, who allowed something out of them towards the repairs of St. Paul's church, which gave rise to the proverb.

Q. Whence arose the proverb "dining with Duke Humphrey?"

A. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was a man of great hospitality, and at his death was buried in St. Paul's; hence it is said of those who walk there during the time of dinner, that they are dining with Duke Humphrey, which implies that they are unable to procure a meal elsewhere.

Q. Why was the nine of diamonds called the curse of Scotland?

A. Various reasons have been assigned, but that which appears the most credible, is from a Scotch Member of Parliament, whose family arms were the nine of diamonds, having voted for the introduction of the malt tax into Scotland.

Q. What is the origin of the term sirloin?

A. The roast beef of Old England is celebrated throughout the world, and the most popular joint is the sirloin, from its having been once actually knighted by Charles II. in one of his merry frolics.

Q. Whence arose the expression "in spite of his teeth?"

A. King John once fined a Jew ten thousand marks, and on his refusing to pay, he ordered one of his teeth to be drawn daily till he consented. The Jew lost seven, and then paid the fine!

Q. What is meant by "bearing off the bell?"

A. This phrase had its origin in horse racing, which was introduced by the Greeks at their Olympic Games, and followed by the Romans in their sports of the circle. Henry II. introduced this pastime into England, and James I. established a race course at Croydon, as did also Charles I. at Hyde Park and Newmarket, where the horses ran for sums of money, or gold and silver bells. Hence arose the phrase "bearing off the bell."

Q. What gave rise to the proverb that "the saddler of Bawtry was hanged for leaving his liquor?"

A. It was anciently a custom to present to malefactors, on their way to the gallows, a great bowl of ale, as the last refreshment they would ever enjoy. This custom prevailed in York, when a man was about to be executed, who would have been saved had he stopped to drink his ale, as his reprieve was on the road, and arrived a few minutes too late!

Q. Whence is the origin of the expression of "nine tailors make a man?"

A. This is an old English vulgar adage, and had its origin from a poor beggar, who craved charity at a tailor's shop, where there were nine men at work,



each of whom contributed a trifle, and gave him the total. The beggar fell on his knees and thanked them, saying they had made a man of him.

Q. What was the origin of the proverb “an’ it please the pigs?”

A. This, with a slight alteration, was an old Roman Catholic ejaculation—“an’ it please the pix,” which is the box in which the host was carried.

Q. What is the origin of the term “merry Andrew?”

A. A person named Andrew Borde, a quack doctor, who was very popular in England in 1547, and a sort of physician to King Henry VIII. used to harangue the populace with great wit and humour from the hustings of his booth, in order to sell his nostrums. Thus Andrew, by his merriment, drew crowds of people together; therefore quacks and buffoons have ever since been called by this name.

Q. Whence is the origin of the words “Pell Mell?”

A. Pall Mall was originally a place where people used to meet and play with malls and balls. It is derived from the Latin *pila*, a ball, and *malleus*, a mallet; the maul was a walk, to which the people resorted to enjoy the game, and the words were anciently pronounced Pell-mell, from the people of every grade in society resorting thither.

## MISCELLANEOUS

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Q. What are we to understand by fairy rings?

A. By fairy rings is meant a phenomenon common in the fields, &c. and which are supposed by the vulgar in England, to be traced by the fairies in their dances: hence the appellation. There are two kinds of fairy rings, one of about seven yards in diameter, containing a round bare path, a foot broad, with grass in the middle of it; the other is smaller in size, encompassed by a circumference of grass, greener and fresher than that of the middle. Some attribute them to the effects of lightning, and others to a kind of fungus, which breaks and pulverizes the soil.

Q. How do people account for sea-water being salt?

A. Some are inclined to believe that beds of salt are naturally deposited in the bottom of the ocean, and were intended by Providence to preserve the waters from putrefaction; others consider that, as every river runs into the sea, they carry with them sufficient salt for that purpose, it being one of the principles in nature, and mixed in greater or less quantities, with every other substance; and as no water runs out of the sea, but is only exhaled from it, no salt escapes in this way, rain-water being proved to be sweet, pure, and light.

Q. Which are the most remarkable trees in the world?



A. They are so various and numerous, that a general description cannot be given. There is the bread-fruit tree of Ceylon, the fruit of which is baked and eaten as we eat bread, and is equally good and nutritious. In Barbuta, near Maracaybo, is a tree, which by piercing the trunk, produces beautiful milk, with which the inhabitants feed their children. In the interior of Africa is a tree which produces excellent butter! It resembles the American oak, and its fruit is not unlike the olive. The great traveller, Park, declared that the flavour surpasses that made from the English cows, and will keep a whole year. At Sierra Leone is the cream-fruit tree; but this, although agreeable to the taste, is as viscous as bird-lime. At Table Bay, near the Cape of Good Hope, is a small tree, or shrub, the berries of which make excellent candles. It is also found in the Azores and America. The vegetable tallow tree also grows in Sumatra; and the bark of a tree in China produces beautiful soap. The tallipot tree in Ceylon grows to the height of 100 feet, the leaf of which is so large, that it will cover nearly twenty people like an umbrella. The Banian tree is the most wonderful of all, as it never dies, and is constantly extending, for as the branches shoot downwards, they take root, and thus produce other trees, whose branches in like manner extend onwards, and resemble large oaks, the fruit of which is much like rich scarlet figs, and is a luxurious subsistence to monkeys and birds of every description. Numerous others of astonishing produce might be named, which our limits prevent us from describing.

Q. Why were weathercocks placed on steeples?

A. Churches were originally built without steeples, but as soon as these were added, (in the eighth century) they were surmounted by a vane, which was made to resemble a cock, the emblem of watchfulness, Hence the term weathercocks.

Q. What properties in man distinguish him as lord of the creation?

A. It was ordained by the great Creator of the world, that man should rule over every other creature, for which purpose he was endowed with faculties which no other class possesses. Man walks erect, can laugh, speak, sing, reason; and enjoys numerous other powers which are not inherent in any other animal.

Q. What is meant by an oath?

A. It is considered (in a legal sense) the most solemn action that a person can undertake, whereby he calls his God to witness his communication, and that he may expect everlasting misery if he pervert the truth. Legal oaths end with "So help me God," when the party who is sworn kisses a Bible or Testament, a book emblematic of his faith or religion.

Q. What is meant by the death-watch?

A. This is a small insect, about the size of the wood-louse, which makes a ticking noise like a watch, in the walls of houses, and the frames of pictures, particularly in summer. This noise is the call of the male insect to the female, and is often the cause of great alarm to ignorant people, who consider it as a token of the death of a friend.

Q. Why is a person who heads a mob, &c. called a ringleader?

A. This originated at sea, in what is termed by the sailors a "round robin," in consequence of their writing their names on a circular piece of paper, in order to prevent a knowledge of the first person who signed, and thus avoid the punishment which would otherwise fall on him who first attached his name to any mutinous document: still it generally happens that the first who signs, takes the lead in any tumult or riot, from which he is called the ringleader.



Q. What are we to understand by bonfires?

A. Some people are inclined to suppose that the name originated with the burning of bones, and Mr. Bagford maintained this opinion, but it appears to be an absurd idea; in fact, the celebrated historian, Stowe, asserts, that they took their origin from the reconciliation of two parties who had been at variance, or having been made loving friends from the bitterest enemies, when the event was celebrated by the kindling of a fire of combustibles, &c. Bon, in French, signifies good, and we have reason to believe that bonfires were used in crowded cities to purify the air, and cleanse it from infection.

Q. Which are considered the oldest books?

A. The first five books in the Bible, generally called the Pentateuch: they were written by Moses. But on secular subjects, Homer's Poems are thought to be the oldest. Before paper was invented, people used various materials in the place of books, such as plates of lead, copper, bark of trees, bricks, stone, wood, &c. The Jewish historian, Josephus, speaks of two columns, one of stone, the other of brick, on which the children of Seth wrote their inventions and astronomical discoveries. The ten commandments were written on stone, and Solon's laws on wooden planks. The ancients used tables of wood, box, and ivory, which they sometimes covered with wax, being more easy to write on, or to rub out what they had written.

Q. Why is meat called by a different name when dead, than it was whilst living?

A. When William the Conqueror came to the English throne, he would only allow the French language to be spoken at court, from which circumstance it is that we call animals kept for food by one name whilst alive, and another when dead: this is, however, peculiar to England. The names of our

animals, when alive, are of Saxon origin, but when dead are of French. The Saxon bull, ox, cow, calf, sheep, pig, &c. is, in French, beef, veal, mutton, pork, &c. and the only difference in English is a slight alteration in the spelling.

Q. How do people account for the eggs of various birds being of different colours, and differently spotted?

A. Because wild fowls live chiefly on insects, or those kinds of food which grow wild; but, as almost all tame fowls live principally on corn, their eggs are usually of a white colour, though sometimes slightly tinged, which may, in some manner, be attributed to the nature and propensities of the birds.

Q. What is understood by the Argonautic expedition?

A. This is one of the primary mythological subjects. It originated in the desire of obtaining the golden fleece, or to be more explicit, the skin of a golden ram, which had been offered to Jupiter, and kept at Colchis, in achievement of which several Grecian heroes sailed for Colchis, in a vessel named the Argo, which was the first of any consequence that sailed from Greece. But to divest the subject of fable, Jason, a chief of great valour and fortitude, sailed to Colchis, to establish a prosperous commerce. In their expedition, they met many obstacles from the rude and barbarous manners of the people whom they had to deal with; but at last they accomplished their wishes, to the fullest extent, and returned to their native country crowned with every success that they could have desired.

Q. Are not different nations noted for their preference to certain diet?

A. Almost every nation has its choice food. The Abyssinians cut a slice from a living ox, and esteem



it one of their chief delicacies. The Tartars think horse-flesh their greatest dainty. The Greenlanders and Samoiedes think train oil the finest of all sauces to their dried fish or flesh, and are able to digest a full meal of whale's fat. Cats are eaten in Spain, insomuch that their mistresses are compelled to confine these animals, lest they should be stolen for human food. The French have a great partiality for frogs. A dish of snails was very common at a Roman table; and the English are noted for their partiality to roast beef. The Egyptians abhor fish, and it has been known that the Neapolitans refused potatoes when there was a famine.

Q. What towns in England are noted as bathing places?

A. The principal hot baths are those of Bath, Bristol, and Brixton Wells, Derbyshire. The best mineral waters are those of Tunbridge, Harrowgate, Leamington, Epsom, and Scarborough: but the chief places of resort are Bath, Brighton, Dawlish, Cheltenham, Harrowgate, Lyme, Margate, Ramsgate, Scarborough, Weymouth, Torquay, &c.

Q. What are the principal amusements of the English?

A. Their diversions are plays, operas, masquerades, balls, cards, musical concerts, horse racing, hunting, fishing, cricket, single-stick, wrestling, billiards, rowing, sailing, swimming, &c.

Q. Are the different sorts of fruit grown in this country indigenous to England?

A. The only native fruits of this island are the strawberry, wortleberry, cranberry, blackberry, wild plum, sloe, elderberry, yewberry, acorn, hips and haws, and a very few others. But we have now almost every other kind of delicious fruit brought from abroad, and first cultivated within the last 300 years.

Q. Whence did we obtain our choice vegetables, flowers, &c.

A. Almost all our corn, vegetables, and flowers, were brought from foreign countries. Rye and wheat are indigenous to Tartary and Siberia; rice was first brought from Ethiopia; buck-wheat from Asia; potatoes from Brazil; gourds and melons from Astracan; cauliflower from Cyprus; asparagus from Asia; cresses from Crete; parsley from Egypt; shallots from Siberia, &c. Jasmin came from the East Indies; the elder tree from Persia; tulip from Cappadocia; daffodil from Italy; lily from Syria; tuberoses from Java and Ceylon; carnation and pink from Italy; aster from China, &c. In short, nearly every choice garden flower now cultivated is of foreign origin, and in general from a warmer climate than ours.

Q. Which are the principal wild animals now in England?

A. Britain formerly nourished a vast number of wild animals, such as bears, wolves, wild boars, stags, roe-bucks, wild bulls, &c.; but now it possesses only the fox, wild cat, badger, martin, otter, weasel, hedge-hog, hare, rabbit, stag, fallow deer, squirrel, dormouse, mole, and several sorts of rats and mice.

Q. How many great forests are there in England?

A. There are only four remaining out of nearly thirty in the time of William the Conqueror; these are the New Forest, in Hampshire; Windsor Forest, in Berkshire; Dean Forest, in Gloucestershire, and Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire.

Q. Where was the first church in England erected?

A. At Glastonbury, in Somersetshire, in the early part of the second century: it was made of wicker-work. The first built of stone was at Lincoln.



Q. How were the English princes originally induced to learn ?

A. So lately as in the reign of Edward VI. it was customary for the Prince of Wales to have what was termed a whipping boy, that is, a boy of noble birth, who waited on the prince, and was always whipped if he (the prince) were idle ; this boy would therefore tease the prince to learn by crying " O pray, save me from a whipping !"

Q. Whence had Charing Cross its origin ?

A. Eleanor, of Castile, a most beautiful woman, and wife to Edward I. died in Nottinghamshire, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. When her remains were being carried thither, Edward caused a stone cross to be erected wherever the body rested ; the last was at Charing. Hence the word Charing Cross.

Q. Why were stone crosses placed at cross roads ?

A. These are very often met with in different parts of England. They are still more numerous on the Continent, and are of great antiquity, as we read in the book of Genesis that Jacob erected a stone pillar, or cross, which custom possibly has been handed down to successive generations.

Q. What is meant by the Belles Lettres ?

A. This is merely the French appellation for polite learning, or superior subjects of education. Under this head are comprised grammar, logic, rhetoric, poetry, music, mathematics, and the learned languages.

Q. Why do we use the word sterling, as applied to current coin ?

A. The word sterling, or esterling, was first applied to the Prussians, who understood the fining of gold better than any other people, whence the term is applied to our current money.

Q. What are we to understand by the word deodand?

A. When a person is accidentally killed by a mill, cart, horse, or anything moveable, that which was the cause of his death is forfeited to the reigning sovereign, whose almoner is appointed to bestow the value in charity, and it is therefore called "deodand," from *deo dandum*, as being to be given away for God's sake.

Q. What four great empires were most conspicuous in history?

A. The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; but several others have been equally famous, such as the Egyptian, Parthian, Chinese, &c.

Q. Which are the most renowned nations of antiquity?

A. Those which are now of very little note or importance; as Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt, Italy, &c. whilst the most barbarous nations of antiquity, are now the most polished and civilized, as Albion, Gallia, Belgium, Helvetia, &c. now called Britain, France, Netherlands, Switzerland, &c.

Q. What was meant by Peter's pence?

A. An annual tax of one penny, or, as some say, of one shilling, imposed on every family in England, and paid to the Pope. It originated with Ina, king of the West Saxons, A.D. 720, and was abolished at the Reformation, in the reign of Henry VIII.

Q. What are we to understand by the term lullaby?

A. It took its rise in superstition, from a supposed fairy called Elaby Gathon, whom nurses invited to watch over sleeping babes, that they might not be changed for others. Hence the term changeling, or infant changed.



Q. Whence arose the custom of wearing powder in the hair?

A. This took its rise from some of the ballad singers in Bartholomew fair in London, who whitened their heads, to make themselves more ridiculous, and to attract the attention of the bystanders.

Q. What are we to understand by the *sister arts*?

A. This term is generally applied to music, poetry, painting, and sculpture, although it must be admitted that other arts have proved of more benefit to mankind, such as writing, printing, &c.

Q. Was there anything remarkable with regard to the Tyrian ships?

A. Yes. They were frequently made of cedar, the benches of ivory, the finest embroidered Egyptian linens were used for sails, and their canopies were of scarlet and purple silk.

Q. What is meant by the word bard?

A. Barrd, or bard, originally meant a prophet, philosopher, musician, herald, teacher, &c. The bards dressed in blue, as an emblem of truth, similar to the primitive priests. The word is derived from bar, which, in Welsh, means top, or eminence; also a court of judicature. Many Christian names are derived from this origin, such as Bar-jonah, Barton, Bardolph, St. Baruch, and others.

Q. What is the origin of the appellation "John Bull," applied to an Englishman?

A. This expression took its rise from Dean Swift's humorous history of Europe, wherein the English people were thus personified. He also called the sovereign of Austria, Squire South, the sovereign of Spain, Street, and that of France Louis Baboon, &c.

Q. Who were the Parthians?

A. The Parthians were supposed to be the ancient Persians, a name derived from the Hebrew, implying

horsemen, as these people were particularly noted for their superior management of horses, and the bow and arrow. They are also classed with the Elamites, *Ælam* being the original name of Persia.

Q. Is there anything remarkable in the frogs of Negroland and North America?

A. Yes. They are much larger than those of Europe, and make a great noise in the night, which, at a distance, very much resembles a pack of hounds in full cry. This, by the Americans, is called a frog concert.

Q. Where were the lands of Uz, Ophir, and Eden, supposed to have been situated?

A. The land of Uz comprehended that rich and fertile country which surrounds Damascus, and a large portion of Arabia Petræa. Ophir included those countries on the eastern part of China and Japan. The garden of Eden was situated north of the Persian Gulf, between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

Q. Describe the treatment of children in the Fox Islands.

A. The parents feed them, when very young, with the coarsest flesh, and generally raw! If an infant cries, the mother immediately carries it to the sea-side, and plunges it in the water till it is quiet. This is done in the coldest day of winter, and instead of hurting the children, it hardens and inures them to the severity of the climate, and enables them to go barefoot throughout the winter.

Q. How do we account for nutmegs being hollow if grated at one end, and solid by beginning at the other?

A. This apparent anomaly is owing to the peculiar structure of the fibres of this fruit, and should be carefully observed by the consumers of it, who



should never begin to grate it at the stalk end, or they will find it hollow throughout ; but by beginning at the other end, it will prove perfectly solid.

Q. Why was oil so much in repute among the ancients ?

A. In the earliest ages, it was customary among the Jews to anoint, with oil, those appointed to high offices ; and they considered this a necessary ingredient in a festival dress, as we read in the Book of Ruth. The Jews also considered it a sovereign remedy against all diseases in the human frame, as well as against the bite of any venomous animal. Washing the feet, and anointing with oil, were the first civilities offered on entering a friend's house. This office was usually performed by the slaves. It is also asserted that oil will still the surface of the water when it is agitated by the waves.

Q. What is meant by the River of Vinegar ?

A. It is a river or small stream at Popayan, in South America, called Rio Vinagre. It rises in a very high chain of mountains, and after a subterraneous course of some miles, it re-appears, and forms a magnificent cascade three hundred feet in height. A person standing near is speedily driven off by a fine shower of acid water, which irritates the eyes, and causes great pain.

Q. What are we to understand by the word astrology ?

A. Astrology was considered by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Chaldeans, as one of their principal arts or sciences, although it must be confessed that it was founded in absurdity, and prosecuted through ignorance and superstition. The professors of this art pretend to foretel events, to calculate what must happen to persons in the course of their lives, &c. by observing the influence of the stars

or planets at the time of their birth. It has been seen, however, that those who believed in this art were the most unhappy. (See Pharaoh, Cæsar, Pompey, Nero, Nebuchadnezzar, &c.) If it were founded in truth, all who were born at the same time as the monarch would be kings or queens, and Esau and Jacob would have been of the same disposition and character; and all who perish in battle must have been born under the same planet!

Q. How do we account for a cat being able to see in the dark?

A. The pupil of the eye of the cat is of an oval form, the transverse diameter being parallel to the nose, and cats have the power of contracting or dilating the pupil at pleasure. We observe that it is always contracted either in the sun or before a fire: this prevents a painful sensation which would be occasioned by a number of rays of light falling on the pupil. But when a cat sits in the shade, or in the dark, she fully dilates the pupil, which enables her to see and seize her prey.

Q. What is meant by the bird of harmony?

A. It is a small greenish bird found in New Zealand, whose notes are so varied and melodious, that a listener might suppose himself surrounded by a hundred singing birds at once. In Van Dieman's Land there is a bird of this kind, whose note resembles the tinkling of a bell, another that appears to have the faculties of laughter. Black petrels are also so numerous there, that a hundred million are sometimes seen on the coast, and black swans in groups of three or four hundred.

Q. What is to be understood by the abbreviated terms Fol. 4to. 8vo. 12mo. &c.?

A. Fol. or folio, implies that the book is printed on single sheets of paper, once folded down, which, of course, makes it of the largest size: 4to. or quarto,



means four leaves to the sheet, or a sheet twice doubled : 8vo. or octavo, implies eight leaves to the sheet, or a sheet folded four times : 12mo. or duodecimo, there are twelve leaves to the sheet ; and 24mo. means double duodecimo, or twenty-four leaves.

Q. Is the flute an instrument of modern invention ?

A. No. It was known to the Greeks and Romans who were devotedly attached to its dulcet sounds. It derives its name from *fluta*, the classical name for the lamprey ; because, like that fish, it is long and perforated along the side.

Q. Whence is the invention of the saw ?

A. This useful instrument had its origin from the circumstance of the jaw-bone of a snake being used to cut through a piece of wood, which succeeded so well, that the operator made a saw of iron, an account of which was displayed in a painting found among the ruins of Herculaneum.

Q. What is meant by a bumper toast ?

A. It is usual in convivial parties to drink what is termed a bumper, that is, the contents of a glass brim full. This had its origin with the English Catholics, who usually drank the Pope's health every day after dinner in a full glass, with the expression in French—*au bon pere*, (to the good father.) Hence the term bumper.

Q. What titles have the various monarchs or supreme rulers in different nations ?

A. Titles are merely appellations of dignity or honour. The monarch of England is styled the King (or Queen) of Great Britain and Ireland. The King of France had the title of His Most Christian Majesty, but since the revolution he is merely styled King of the French. The monarch of Spain has many titles, the principal is Most Catholic Majesty. The Pope has the title of Holiness ; and Emperors

have that of Imperial Majesty. The title of Emperor has pre-eminence above that of Kings or other sovereigns, as a King reigns only over a single people. The sovereign of Turkey is called Grand Seignior, Sultan, and Highness. There are other titles in different parts, such as that of Doge, the chief magistrate of Venice and Genoa. The sovereign of Algiers is called the Dey. Bey also denotes a superior governor of the Turkish empire. Viceroy is the superior governor of a kingdom, in the name, and instead of, the King or Queen, as the Viceroy of Ireland.

Q. Why do people wear oak branches in their hats on the 29th of May?

A. An opinion has prevailed, for nearly two centuries, that Charles II. concealed himself in an oak tree, after the battle of Worcester, and oak branches, or leaves, are worn in commemoration of his preservation. But this is evidently erroneous, as the battle of Worcester was fought on the 3rd of September, 1651, when Charles fled from the field, and concealed himself in a pollard oak-tree in a wood near Boscobel House, from whence he escaped to Normandy. He subsequently landed in England on the 29th of May, (which was his birth-day) when the royalists displayed branches of oak, as being partly instrumental to his restoration. Hence the custom of wearing oak on this day.

Q. What are we to understand by the diadem?

A. This was, originally, a kind of ribbon tied round the head. The great historian, Pliny, says that Bacchus, the god of wine, was the inventor of it; and Athæneus asserts that toppers and drunkards made use of them to preserve themselves from the ill effects of the fumes of wine, by tying them tightly round their foreheads. The Pope usually wears a triple crown, or diadem, called a tiara.



**Q.** What is meant by the crown and sceptre ?

**A.** The sceptre is of much greater antiquity than the crown. The poet Homer, 884 B. C. speaks of the sceptre, and the elder Tarquin assumed it 577 B. C. We also read of the sceptre in the book of Esther. It appears that crowns were first worn as a religious decoration, and not to constitute a monarch. It was first used as a kingly ornament by the Emperor Aurelian, about 275 B. C. The first imperial, or double crown, was worn by Edward IV.

**Q.** What are we to understand by that portion of the Bible termed Apocrypha ?

**A.** Apocrypha is derived from a Greek word, and implies something secret or not well known ; but when applied to books, it denotes that their authors are not known with certainty ; consequently, as their authority and genuineness are doubtful, they are not admitted as canonical. A portion of the Apocrypha is, however, allowed, and occasionally read in our churches, by which it evidently appears that the Christians considered the various histories contained in it to be founded in truth ; and in the year 400, at the Council of Carthage, the books of Esdras and others were ordered to be read in churches.

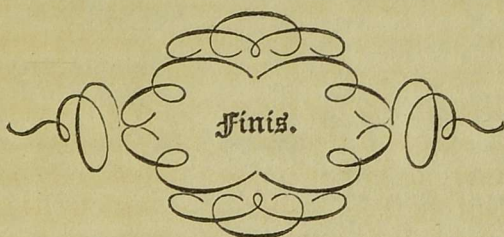
**Q.** Whence did the various European nations derive their names ?

**A.** Principally from some particular cause or object. For instance, Ireland (which Julius Cæsar first called Hibernia) is a kind of modification of Erin, or the country of the west. Scotland, from Scotia, a tribe which originally came from Ireland. It was anciently called Caledonia, which means a mountainous country, forests of woodlands. Portugal, the ancient Lusitania, was so named from a town on the river Douro, called Cale, opposite to which the inhabitants built a city called Porto, or Oporto ; and when the country was recovered from the Moors,

the inhabitants combined the words, and called it the kingdom of Portucale. Hence Portugal. Spain, (the ancient Iberia, from the river Iberus, or Hispania) from the Phœnician Spaniga, which signifies abounding with rabbits, which animals were very numerous in that country. Hence Spain. France, from the Franks, a people of Germany, who conquered that country. Its ancient name was Celta, Gaul, or Gallia-Bracchata, the latter signifying striped breeches, which were worn by the natives. Switzerland, the ancient Helvetia, was so named by the Austrians, who called all the inhabitants of these mountainous countries Schweitzers. Italy received its present name from a renowned prince called Italus. It was called Hesperia, from its western locality. Ausonia, from the Ausones; and Saturnia-Tellus, or Saturn's land, from the fabled idea that Saturn, the god of Time, resided there. Holland, the ancient Batavi, a war-like people, was so named from the German word hohl, the English of which is hollow, implying a very low country. The inhabitants are called Dutch, from the German Deutsch, or Teutsch. Hence Deutschland, or Teutschland. Sweden and Norway were anciently called Scandinavia, which the northern antiquarians think means a country, the woods of which had been burnt or destroyed. The appellation, Sweden, is derived from Sictuna, or Suitheod. The native term Norway, or the northern way, explains itself. Prussia, from Pruzzi, a Slavonic race; but some writers suppose it took its name from Russia, and the Slavonic syllable po, which means adjacent, or near. Denmark means the marches, territories, or boundaries of the Danes. Russia is the ancient Sarmatia, which has been subsequently named Moscovy. It derived its present name from Russi, a Slavonic tribe, who founded the Russian monarchy: the original savage inhabitants used to paint their bodies, in order to appear more terrible in battle. They generally lived in the mountains, and



their chariots were their only habitations. Turkey took its name from the Turks, or Turcomans, which signifies wanderers, and originally belonged to the Scythians or Tartars. It is sometimes called the Ottoman Empire, from Othoman, one of their principal leaders. The limits of this work prevent further explanation.







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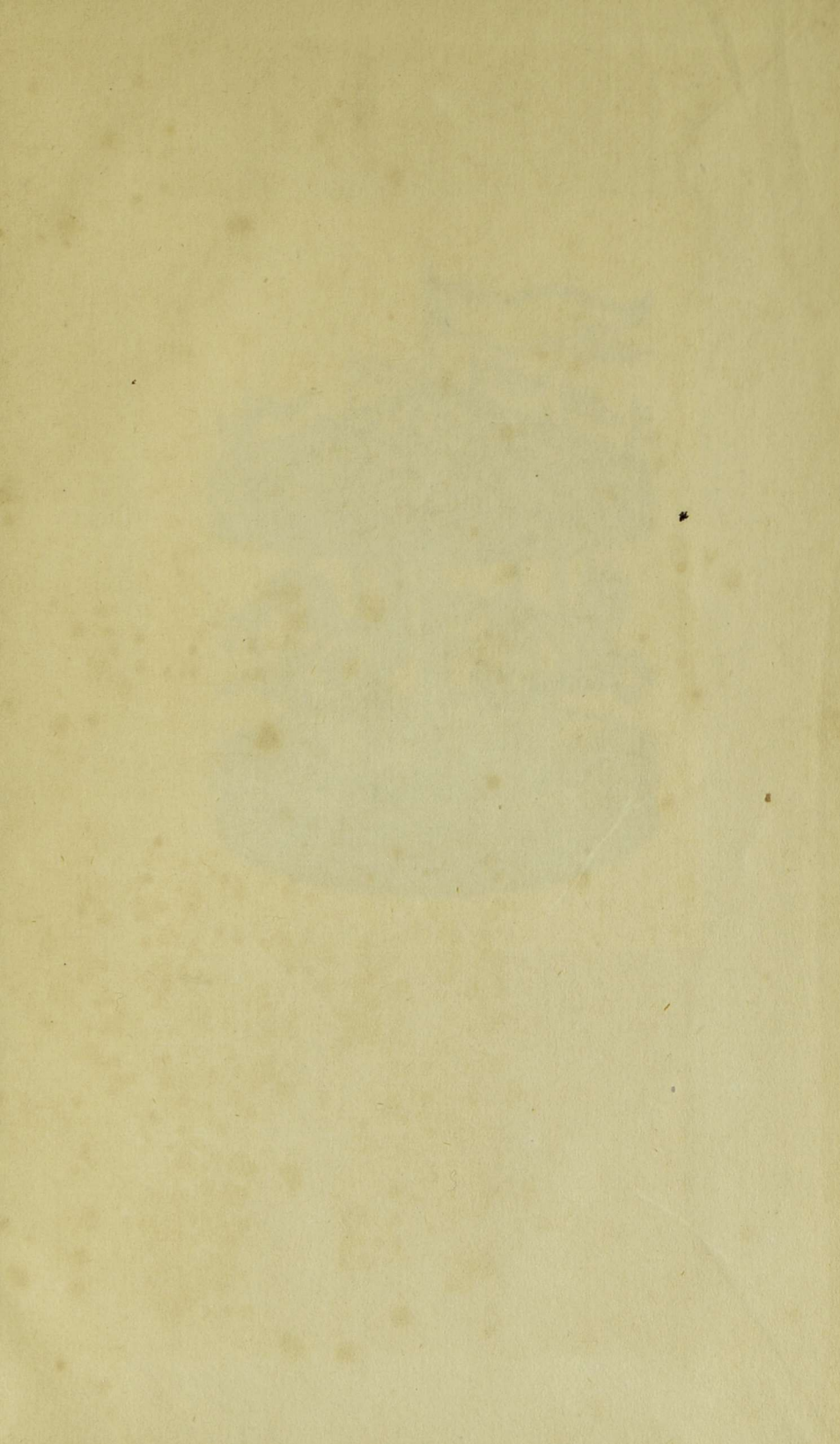
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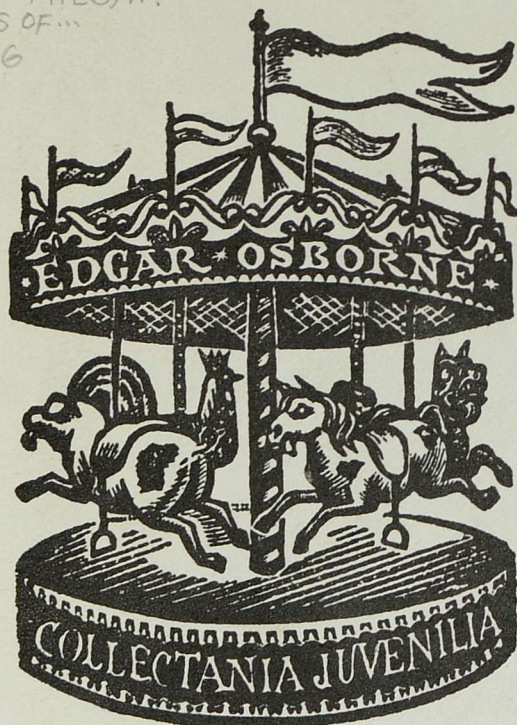








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