

CONSCRIPTION.

European Peasants Imagine That All Countries Enforce It.

Conscription is so universal throughout Europe that the French or Italian peasant cannot imagine a government which does not enforce it. This amusing account of the struggles of some Italians to comprehend our army system is found in an article by H. A. Fouck in Harper's Weekly.

At one of my stopping places the hostess wandered in and sat down before the register in which I had written my autobiography. Her eyes fell on the figures indicating my age. "Aha!" she cried, jabbing the number with a stubby forefinger and winking good humoredly. "Soldiering is hard work. I don't blame you any. Officers are hard masters."

I had too often been accused of running away to escape military service to be at all put out by this

"You went on your own," she said, "and you ran away to the mountains. How should you fly the same reason as me?"

"I am not a soldier," she said, "but you are not a soldier either."

"You are not a soldier?" she asked.

"No, sir. It's a mystery."

"Then we'll hold an inquest."

"In response to the amazed exclamation from the owners of the petrified man the inquisitor explained that he was the prosecuting attorney of the county and that it was his duty to see that inquests were held in all cases where death was mysterious. The boys protested, but in vain. They tried to get out of town with their exhibit, but were arrested and put under bond. The petrified man was laid out in state and the coroner summoned. He brought a mallet along. The crowd was immense, for this time the show was free.

"If there's anybody here who knows how this man came to his death he will please come forward," said the prosecutor.

"Nobody responded, for the boys had jumped their bond."

"Then I will make a post-mortem examination," said the coroner, picking up his mallet.

"He tapped the petrified soldier alongside the head. It rolled around and around like a baby on a doll rack when the thrower hits a bullseye. Then he tapped an arm. That member also did the whirling act, because an iron rod ran through the center. The other arm performed the same way under the coroner's scientific manipulation.

"What do you find was the cause of death, doctor?" asked the prosecutor.

"Too much iron in the system."

"Without another word he picked up his mallet and left the death chamber. The petrified man was patched up and sold to a traveling speculator for \$60, which just about covered the costs of the inquest and the attorney's fees. The last I heard of the petrified man he was being shown in the Ozarks as the remains of a Persian king or duke who had been slain several thousand years ago by his subjects, who thought he was hard."—New York Sun.

Long Canals.
The Grand canal of China is the longest entirely artificial waterway in the world, extending as it does from Hangchow to Peking, a distance of almost 700 miles. The part between the Yellow river and the Yangtze is said to have been constructed over 500 years before Christ. The remaining portions were built separately at later dates, and Kublai-Khan, whose rule began in 1280, united them and made the continuous canal, which is still used. Much longer continuous waterways, partially natural and for the remainder of their extent artificial, exist elsewhere. Of these the longest reaches from the Chinese frontier to St. Petersburg. It measures 4,472 miles. Another, running from Astrakhan to St. Petersburg, is 1,434 miles. Both these were projected and commenced by Peter the Great.

Always the Sermon.
An American was being shown over an old church beneath which hundreds of people were interred.

"A great many people sleep beneath this roof," said the guide, with a wave of his hand.

"Is that so?" exclaimed the American. "Same way over in our country. Why don't you get a more interesting preacher?"—Liverpool Mercury.

Flowers as Food.
The old time epicurean was as enthusiastic over flowers and herbs as is the modern vegetarian over a cabbage. He mixed all kinds of buds, leaves and flowers with loving care and gave them all the common name of "sallets." Violets and cowslips he put into custards. Elder buds, burdock roots, broom buds and fennel were used for pickling. Wing coloring sirups all flowers were used. Tobacco was a curiosity.

THE PETRIFIED MAN.

A Cardiff Giant Swindle That Came to a Sudden End.

"Not very long after Barnum's Cardiff giant went into history some young men appeared at Lancaster, Mo., with the petrified body of a man which they said they had found on their father's farm in Iowa while plowing," related the man who was telling of the incident.

"The young men were exhibiting their petrified man in a tent, charging 10 cents admission. To the large and keenly interested crowd they explained that while working in the field one day the plow struck something hard, supposedly a rock. The plowman stooped down to remove the obstruction, but could not. He called his brother. By their united efforts with shovels they uncovered the rock, which turned out to be a petrified man, perfect in every outline. A great many people came to the grave and identified the remains as a neighbor who had gone off to the war, returned home and mysteriously disappeared. A mark under the eye and some peculiar scars in the back were the main means of identification, the speaker said, and there was no doubt that the soldier had died and turned to stone.

"A large man who had been listening thoughtfully spoke up when the description was finished.

"You are sure that's Jim —?" he asked.

"Certainly," said the speaker. "My father knew him well. He has positively identified him."

"Know how he came to his death?"

"No, sir. It's a mystery."

"Then we'll hold an inquest."

"In response to the amazed exclamation from the owners of the petrified man the inquisitor explained that he was the prosecuting attorney of the county and that it was his duty to see that inquests were held in all cases where death was mysterious. The boys protested, but in vain. They tried to get out of town with their exhibit, but were arrested and put under bond. The petrified man was laid out in state and the coroner summoned. He brought a mallet along. The crowd was immense, for this time the show was free.

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Lucky He Had a Lone Trump.
Joe Cowell in his "Recollections of the Stage" tells a story characteristic of the days now passed away. While on a Mississippi river steamer he was sitting near a table watching a game of euchre. Another onlooker was making it his business to spy out the trumps in one player's hand and telegraph the information to his opponent by laying the same number of fingers carelessly on the table. Of course one lost and the other gained steadily a considerable time until at a deal the loser received one trump. The fact was duly signaled by the forefinger laid on the table, which the losing gentleman very coolly but adroitly cut off with a heavy knife.

"Hello, stranger! What are you about? You have cut off one of my fingers!" cried the dismembered man.

"I know it," said the amputator coolly, "and if I'd had more trumps you'd have lost more fingers."

Had Wings, but Couldn't Fly.
At an examination in a village school a class of infants was being questioned on natural history. After several questions the inspector asked:

"What bird that comes from Africa has wings, but can't fly?"

The class was dumfounded.

Thinking to encourage them, the inspector offered a sixpence to the little boy or girl who could tell him. After a few seconds' hesitation a little girl of four years put out her hand.

"Well, my little dear," said the inspector, "what is it?"

"Please, sir, a dead un!"—London Tit-Bits.

NUTS AS FOOD.

They Contain Little Water and Much Fat and Protein.

The edible portion of nuts, with few exceptions, is very concentrated food, containing little water and much fat. In general nuts are also rich in protein. Those ranking highest in this nutrient, the pignolia, a variety of pine nut imported from Spain, with 33.9 per cent; the peanut, with 29.8 per cent, and the butternut, with 27.9 per cent protein, surpass most ordinary animal or vegetable foods in this respect. The almond, beechnut and pistachio, with 21.4 per cent, 21.8 per cent and 22.6 per cent respectively, compare favorably with dried legumes. The Brazil nut contains 17.4 per cent protein, the filbert 16.5 per cent, the walnut 18.2 per cent, the hickory nut 15.4 per cent, the pine nut 14.6 per cent, the pecan 12.1 per cent and the dry chestnut but 10.7 per cent. The dry acorn, fresh chestnut and coconut, with 4.4, 6.4 and 6.6 per cent respectively, are not as rich in protein as bread.

Of the nuts here included the richest in fat is the pecan, with an average of 70.7 per cent, but seven other varieties—the Brazil nut, butternut, candlenut, filbert, hickory nut, pine nut and walnut—contain upward of 60 per cent. The almond, coconut and pistachio yield between 50 and 60 per cent of this nutrient. The beechnut, peanut and pignolia contain about 50 per cent. In other words, in thirteen of the varieties of nuts appearing in the foregoing table half or more of the edible portion is fat or oil.

Only a few of the commonly used nuts yield any notable amounts of total carbohydrate matter, the dry chestnut, with 73 per cent, rating highest. Beechnuts, pine nuts and peanuts have about 18 per cent. The quantity of starch found is, with some exceptions, quite small, ranging from 3 per cent in the beechnut to 27 per cent in the chestnut.—Department of Agriculture Report.

The Word Grottesque.

"Grottesque" is derived curiously from the word "grotto." Ancient Roman families often had artificial grottoes in their grounds, and these were decorated with quaint paintings and whimsical figures, such as we should term "grottesque." Commonly these were fanciful and incongruous combinations of parts of plants or animals. Conspicuous examples of the grotesque in classical art were the centaur, a horse's body joined to a man's head and shoulders; the griffin, a monster combining a lion and an eagle, and Scylla, a sea monster with a woman's head and a fish's tail, a peril, as ancient poets sang, to mariners sailing between Sicily and Italy. In mediæval times her place in grotesque art was taken by the mermaid, a more poetical fancy. The middle ages used the grotesque chiefly in ecclesiastical gargoyles, the best of which are the "devils" of Notre Dame referred to in Victor Hugo's "Quasimodo." The idea of the devil as a man with horns, hoofs and a tail is probably drawn from grotesque art.

Sugar in Olden Times.

Cane sugar was produced by the Chinese at a very remote epoch. In western countries it was a more recent introduction. The Roman writers Pliny, Varro and Lucian at the beginning of our era barely mentioned it. It was then known by the name of Indian salt and honey of Asia, Arabia or India. In 1099 crusaders arriving in Syria discovered sugar cane, which became a favorite dainty of the soldiers. During the following centuries the sugar cane was introduced into Cyprus, the Nile delta, the north coast of Africa as far as Gibraltar, Sicily and the kingdom of Naples. It reached Spain in the fifteenth century and thence was carried to Madeira and the Canaries. In 1644 the French imported it into Guadeloupe and a little later into Martinique and Louisiana. The Portuguese introduced it into Brazil and the English into Jamaica.—Scientific American.

The Personal Argument.

"Do you think the world is growing better, George?"

"Do I understand that you want me to decide whether I am a better man than my father or not?"

"How funny!"

"Oh, I don't know. Are you a better woman than your mother?"

"Why, of course not. How absurd!"

"Then how do you expect the world to grow better when you fail to help it along?"

"George, you are very rude."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Her Aim.

"I understand you shot a burglar during the absence of your husband," said the great detective.

"Yes," admitted the frail little woman, "I did."

"What became of him?" asked the detective.

"Why, the other burglar carried him away," answered she.

"Which other burglar?" he said.

"The one I shot at," she explained.

OUR OLD TREES.

California's Giant Sequoias Antedate the Pyramids.

The giant sequoia trees of Calaveras county, Cal., are the oldest living things on the face of the earth. Not another thing that has life in it but was germinated since they began their existence. No one knows exactly how old they are, but some that have been felled indicate that they were more than 4,000 years old, so that it is safe to say that these large trees have been growing for at least that length of time. One of them is estimated to be at least 5,000 years of age and is still in a healthy condition and bids fair to live hundreds or even thousands of years longer.

When the pyramids of Egypt were built these trees were of goodly size. When Rome was founded they would have furnished beams for the bridges. The temples of ancient Greece and Assyria might have been decorated with their leaves.

One cannot behold these gigantic trees without a feeling of awe at the ephemeral existence of things in general. There they stand, themselves young in the record of the world, yet the oldest living things upon the face of the earth. All else that was alive when they came into existence has perished. Empires have sprung up, flourished, died since these sprouts poked their tender heads above the soil. Colossal monuments of art have crumbled into dust. Races have evolved, prospered, perished and been forgotten since they first budded in their youth; continents have been changed, mountains have been formed, the confines of the seas have been altered by erosion or by earthquake; lakes have come into existence and dried up. Harkening back to the days of their youth, it is a new world which they behold at this time.

As for the life of man himself, a mere breath compares with theirs. It is a proud family that traces its ancestry back for a dozen generations—for a couple of hundred years. The royal houses of the world are sometimes able to trace their lineage for a thousand years, when it is lost in the dim light of uncertainty. Yet here stands the monarchs that have waved their plumes in triumph for many times as long as the oldest of the royal houses.

Man is born and obtains his growth, he struggles and succumbs, his body is given to the worms, his bones are pulverized into dust, his very name and place forgotten and other generations come upon the scene, yet these trees go about their way of living, gathering up the moisture and the chemicals and building them into wood and bark and leaves, apparently unmindful of the passing of time.—Dayton News.

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