QUEER CUSTOMS IN OLD NAVIES.

Many quaint and curious customs will be found by the inquisitive visitor to the warships lying off the Jamestown Exposition to be held at Hampton Roads in 1907. These customs derive their greatest charm from the fact that they are a survival of olden days and events long since forgotten.

For instance, the visitor will see on the sleeves of many British officers a patch of lighter colored cloth with a row of three buttons. If the visitor is so curious as to ask what rank that sign indicates, his host will tell him that it is not indicative of rank but is a survival of the time when "My Lords of the British Admiralty" found it necessary to curb the young midshipman's tendency to use his sleeve as an impromptu handkerchief. Hence the three buttons. Chevrons worn on the sleeve of petty officers survive from feudal usage. Chevron is the French word for "rafter", and the chevron worn on the sleeve was put there to show the wearer belonged to the house of the lord whose heraldic emblems were displayed underneath the chevrons. For a long time the United States Army wore their chevrons pointing down. Considering the origin of the custom of wearing chevrons, this was wrong and when it was called to the attention of the War Department, the custom was immediately changed so that now army chevrons point upward as do the rafters in any well behaved house.

The visitor will observe that in the British navy the officers leave and enter their ship by means of the port or left gangway instead of the starboard gangway which is on the right side looking toward the bow, as is the custom in other navies. This custom also prevailed in the British navy until the great mutiny at Nore in 1750 when the crews of the vessels in the mutiny sent the officers over the port gangplank as a mark of disrespect and set them down on the beach. When the mutiny was suppressed the officers came back into their ships over the port gangway and have ever since used that as the most honorable entrance to the ship.

Time is counted on shipboard by bells. The day is divided into six periods of fours each. The periods or watches commence at noon, 4 p. m., 8 p. m., midnight, 4 a. m., 8 a. m. At 12:30 p. m. the ship's bell is struck once. Two bells announces 1 o'clock, 3, half past 1 and 4, 2 p. m. This goes on until 4 p. m. is sounded by eight bells when the count for that watch is ended. At half past four it is begun again with one tap on the bell. This custom is followed in all navies except the British which instead of striking four bells at 6 o'clock, strike only once. This also is in memory of a mutiny. The legend as still told in the British navy is of a great British fleet lying at anchor in a British port crowded with mutinous men who had pledged each other to arise and overpower their officers when the last stroke of four bells in the second dog watch (6 p. m.) were dying away in echoes. With his hand poised to strike the bell four times, the marine who duty it was to keep the time, first learned of the mutiny. His captain and the admiral of the fleet were both absent. If he struck the full measure the mutineers would be on him before help could reach him. To confuse them and gain time, the marine struck the bell but once and for some time the mutineers supposed it to be only half past 4 o'clock. Their first intimation that their plot had been discovered was when the soldiers appeared among them and arrested their ringleaders.

Still another curious fact for the visitor to the Jamestown Exposition to remember will be that the three white stripes running around the wide collar of the bluejacket was originally placed there to commemorate Lord Nelson's three greatest victories, the Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar. Not knowing what they represented at that time the French navies also adopted the idea and to this day the three white stripes run around the collars of French and Spanish bluejackets, commemorating their own defeat at Trafalgar.

CURIOSITIES IN COINS

Astoria's Authority on Numismatics Writes Interestingly.

THINGS GENERALLY UNKNOWN

Matters on Gold and Silver Money of Country Never Put There by Law—Private Mails of Early Days—Careers of Some Coiners.

The Morning Astorian is indebted, as its readers must also be, to Mr. D. B. Browne, of this city, for the following very interesting article on the curiosities of American coinage and the early incidents of its mintage by those responsible for its initial utterance, and other matters of peculiar importance attending its use and non-usage:

Of coins of the tenth century I might state there are very few people who know anything about them. I am reminded of many curious facts about an early coinage which is very little known outside of numismatic circles. For instance how many know that the words "E Pluribus Unum" which have appeared on various United States coins, and are on the standard silver dollar and the nickel five-cent piece of today, were never authorized by law to be so placed? Very few, and yet, no doubt, as many know it as know that the later motto, "In God We Trust," which appears on all the minor coins, was likewise originally stamped on them without authority from the government.

The motto "E Pluribus Unum" first appeared on an American coin in 1786. There was no mint then, and, in fact, no United States; the constitution forming the Union not having as yet been adopted. There was a private mint at Newbury, N. Y., and "E. Pluribus Unum" was first placed on a copper coin struck at that mint. Very few collections have specimens of this coin. It is very valuable. In 1787 a New York goldsmith coined a piece of money which was known as the sixteen-dollar gold piece; and upon it the motto was stamped in this form "Unum E Pluribus."

Only four of these coins are known to be in existence. They are valued at more than $2000 each. New Jersey issued various copper coins in 1787 with the motto stamped upon them. A great many of our early coins, before there was any legal authority for national coinage were made in England, most of these were copper and were coined for different states and all bore the words "E Pluribus Unum." The United States Mint was established in 1792 but the use of the national motto on any of the gold, silver or copper coins was not authorized or directed by any of the provisions of the act establishing it. The motto remained on our early gold and silver coins until 1834, when it was omitted from the gold coins. In 1836 it was omitted from the 25-cent pieces, and in 1837 from all silver coins. It was not stamped on any coin again until it appeared on the nickel and the standard silver dollar. The words "In God We Trust" were first placed on the 2-cent piece which came into our subsidiary coinage in 1866, but is now no longer part of it. The motto was placed there by direction of James Polloc then director of the mint at Philadelpha, and no by any legslation of congress authorizing the minting of the 2-cent piece. The motto was subseqjuently stamped on our silver half and quarter dollars the mint thus boldly declaring the theological status of the country regardless of the constitutional attitude on the subject.

In 1793 the first gold coins were stamped by authority in the mint from gold found in North Carolina. By the way, it may be another fact but little known, that the first gold diggings and mines in the United Staes were in North Carolina, and that the placer pit mines of that state, together with those of Georgia and South Carolina, discovered later, were so full of gold that they supplied the mints and the demands of trade in this country with the precious metal from 1830 until the discovery of gold in California, the mint having regions alone more than $25,000,000 worth of gold. It was the gold yield of North Carolina and Georgia that led to the establishment of the branch mints at Charlotte, N. C., and Dahlonega, Georgia.

Long before that, however, gold dust being the universal circulating medium in lower North Carolina and Northern Georgia, and the adjacent regions of South Carolina, and the risk and inconvenience attending its use being very great, a German goldsmith, named Christopher Bechtler, established a private mint in the South Mountain district of North Carolina, in Rutherford county, and seat for the turning of gold into money. He stamped from the mines that brought in their gold, in either from the North Carolina, Georgia or South Carolina mines, for coinage into denominations of $1, $2.50 and $5.00, he receiving a certain per centage of the gold for his work. This mint was in operation from 1831 until Bechtels death in 1843. The coins were stamped and minted by a press and dies made by Bechtel himself. The dies were cut with the denominational quality of fineness of the gold, name of the coins and the abbrevation of the name of the state in which the gold was mined.

No alloy was used in the minting. Bechtler was so conscientious in denoting the fineness of the gold that many of the coins of his mint that have been melted down and assayed at the government assay office at Charlotte, have proved to be finer than the mark on the coins declared them to be. Bechtler made a fortune from the seignorage of his coining, and although the United States branch mint was established at Charlotte in 1838, the Bechtler money was for years thereafter the popular currency of a large portion of the south. Even today some way back mountaineer occasionally presents one of these rare coins at the village store in payment for purchases, it having been perhaps hoarded for years in his family.

Yet, curious as it may seem, these old coins of that private mint in the wild hills of North Carolina, rare as they are, and of such interesting association, have but their face value among collectors.

D. B. BROWNE.

People Who Never Sneeze.

"Africans never sneeze," said a globe trotter, "and their descendants, the colored people of our own land, if they are pure blooded, don't sneeze either. A cold, damp atmospheric condition is the cause of sneezing. Since it is practically never cold and damp in Africa, no man sneezes there whether he be native or foreigner. The natives, because they have never sneezed in Africa, can't sneeze when they leave Africa—for the same reason perhaps that one who has never been in the water can't swim when he falls overboard. At any rate, be the reason what it may, the fact remains that the African, either in the jungle or on Broadway, never rends the air with a keechoo."—New York Press.

Masculine Curiosity.

At Eaton hall in the days of the old Duke of Westminster there stood on the mantelpiece of the principal guest chamber a clock of somewhat remarkable design. Underneath hung a card bearing the legend, "Please do not touch me." This room was set apart for bachelor visitors especially. An eminent politician to whom this room had been allotted asked his host one evening after dinner the reason for the prohibitory injunction. The duke replied: "I have often contended with my wife that women are more curious than men. To satisfy me of the contrary fact she has placed the clock to which you refer in the bachelors' room with the notice affixed to it. The result has been that every man, with one notable exception, who has occupied the room has asked me the reason of the notice." "And who," inquired the visitor, "who, may I ask, was the notable exception?" "Mr. Fawcett, the postmaster general," was the reply, "but then, poor man, he was blind."

Women Boxers.

Many modern Englishwomen smoke. Some of them used to be expert boxers. Ann Field of Stoke Newington, donkey driver, issued this challenge: "Well known for my abilities in boxing in my own defense, having been affronted by Mrs. Stokes, styled the European championess, do fairly invite her to a trial of the best skill in boxing for £10 ($50), fair rise and fall, and question not but to give her such proofs of my judgment that shall oblige her to acknowledge me championess of the stage to the entire satisfaction of all my friends." Thereto the gentle Elizabeth Stokes replied: "I have not fought in this way since I fought the famous boxing woman of Billingsgate twenty-nine minutes and gained a complete victory six years ago, but as the famous Stoke Newington woman dares me to fight her for the £10 I do assure her I will not fail meeting her for the said sum."

Building Wreckers.

Perhaps no band of men in the world suffered such constant injuries, if not death, as the corps of building wreckers to be found in every large city. They visit a building which has been gutted by fire, the tottering walls of which are still standing and which accordingly are a menace to pedestrians. It is the business of these wreckers to pull the walls down, and a half hour spent watching them at this work brings the quick thrill as nothing else in our humdrum urban civilization can. They swarm over the swaying walls with reckless impunity, fastening ropes here and there, preparing for the long and strong pull. Frequently the walls go in simply because of the weight of the men at work upon them. The bodies are dug out of the mass of iron and brick, and the work goes on as if nothing had happened.—Technical World.

"Did you ever buy any gold bricks?"

"No," answered Farmer Corntossel. "I never exactly bought any gold bricks. But I've bought heaps of canned peas and patent butter to be retailed to summer boarders."—Washington Star.