

Our Query and Reply Department



How will the Panama canal be lighted?

The canal proper will be lighted by strong lights on both sides; the channel through Gatun lake will be marked by lighted beacons and the locks will be brilliantly illuminated by electricity. The passage of the canal can be made as safely and expeditiously at night as in the day time.

Which is correct, "all bowled" up or "balled" up, and why?

Balled up is an Americanism for snow or mud accumulated on a horse's hoof and thus figuratively for anything that is tangled or confused.

Has the official flag of the United States any official dimensions? What is a storm flag?

The official flag of the United States has forty-eight stars in a blue field, arranged in six rows of eight stars each. The garrison flag of the army is made of bunting, thirty-six feet long and twenty feet wide, and has thirteen stripes. In the upper quarter, next the staff, is a field or "union" of stars, equal to the number of states, in a blue field over one-third the length of the flag, extending to the lower edge of the fourth red stripe from the top. The storm flag is 20 by 10 feet and the recruiting flag nine feet nine inches by four feet four inches. The American "jack" is the "union" or blue field of the flag. The revenue marine service flag, authorized by act of congress March 2, 1790, was originally prescribed to "consist of sixteen perpendicular stripes, alternate red and white, the union of the ensign bearing the arms of the United States in dark blue on a white field." The sixteen stripes represented the number of states which had been admitted to the Union at that time, and no change has been made since.

What is the oldest tune in the world?
At the battle of Leipzig, about 100 years ago, where Napoleon was beaten, Bonaparte walked about softly whistling the tune of "Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre." It is a very old tune and has many words put to it. It is the tune that has acquired "We Won't Go Home Till Morning" and "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow."

What are officers of the United States regular army paid?

Officers in active service are paid: Lieutenant general, \$11,000; major general, \$8,000; brigadier general, \$6,000; colonel, \$4,000; lieutenant colonel, \$3,500; major, \$3,000; captain, \$2,400; first lieutenant, \$2,000; second lieutenant, \$1,700. Officers below the rank of brigadier general receive 10 per cent more on the pay of the grade for each term of five years' service, not to exceed 40 per cent in all. Thus the maximum pay of a colonel with increase by length of service is \$5,000; of lieutenant colonel, \$4,500, etc. Further, any officer below the rank of major required to be mounted receives \$150 per annum additional if he provides one suitable mount at his own expense and \$200 if he provides two mounts. All officers serving outside of the United States, except Porto Rico and Hawaii, receive 10 per cent increase in pay while so serving.

Is the population of Ireland increasing or decreasing?

Every census since 1841 has shown a decrease. The census of 1841 showed the population of Ireland to be 8,175,124, the largest on record; in 1851 there was a decrease of 1,622,739, in 1861 a further decrease of 753,418, in 1871 a further decrease of 386,390, in 1881 of 237,541, in 1891 of 470,080, in 1901 of 245,975, in 1911 of 76,824, the population being 4,381,051 in 1911 against 8,175,124 in 1841.

How much does it cost to fire the different size guns?

The guns used in the navy range from six inch to fourteen inch caliber or bore. The six inch gun carries a 100 pound shell, seven inch gun 165 pound shell, eight inch gun 250 pound shell, ten inch gun 500 pound shell, twelve inch gun 850 pound shell and thirteen inch gun 1,100 pound shell. To fire one of the big guns using the shells and explosive that would be used in battle costs from \$477 to \$720 for each discharge, according to the size of the gun, but the cost in target practice is only about \$250 each discharge because they use cheap shells and no explosives. The big guns are used twice a year in target practice, the target for an eight inch gun at five mile range being 30 by 60 feet in size.

Will you kindly interpret for me the abbreviation "ss," as used in legal practice?

"Ss" is an abbreviation of the Latin word "scilicet" and means "to wit" or "that is to say." It is used to call attention to what is immediately to follow, introducing explanatory matter relating to what has immediately preceded. Other abbreviations for the same word are "scil" and "sc." The word "scilicet" is in itself a contraction of the Latin words "scire licet" and means literally "it is permitted to know."

What is the largest building in the world? I do not mean the tallest, but covering the most ground.

The Vatican palace at Rome is the largest, covering thirteen and a half acres, but with its additions and enlargements it was several centuries in building. The most extensive building in the world, constructed at one time, is the Pennsylvania station in New York city, which occupies eight acres of ground and has exterior walls measuring about one-half a mile. The capitol at Washington covers 153,112 square feet, or nearly four acres.

Who coined the proverb about calling a spade a spade to indicate frankness or boldness of speech?

Humphrey Gifford, an English rimester of the sixteenth century, wrote a song in which he said:
I cannot say the crow is white,
But needs must call a spade a spade.
But the ancient Greeks expressed the same idea by a proverb about calling a fig a fig and a hoe a hoe.

What is "feminism" and the "feminist movement"?

The feminist movement is declared by its advocates to be an organized effort to elevate the plane of woman, politically, economically and socially. All feminists are not agreed as to the best methods to pursue to achieve their ends. Neither are they in absolute harmony as to those ends, and so it is difficult exactly to define the movement. The adherents all seem to look forward to a revolution gradually accomplished by which women are to be made free and are to be elevated, while men are to become correspondingly of less account in the world.

How many presidents of the United States had been soldiers before their election?

Washington, Monroe and Jackson were soldiers of the Revolutionary war; Jackson, W. H. Harrison, Tyler, Taylor and Buchanan in the war of 1812; Lincoln in the Black Hawk (Indian) war of 1832; Taylor, Pierce and Grant in the Mexican war; Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Benjamin Harrison and McKinley in the civil war; Roosevelt in the war with Spain.

When did the phrase "kitchen cabinet" originate and what did it mean?

It originated during Andrew Jackson's administration as president and was applied to a few personal friends of his, politicians and officeholders, who were said to have more influence over his official actions than the members of his cabinet had, and because they had a kind of back door entrance to the White House they were dubbed "the kitchen cabinet."

I am a citizen of America. My wife is going abroad. Will she have to show my citizen papers when she comes back, or can I get a passport?

Send your citizenship papers to the department of state, when a passport will be issued, or give your wife the citizenship papers themselves to take with her. A passport will cost \$1.

What is the oldest or earliest authentic record bearing on the personal life and character of Jesus Christ? Is there anything older than the gospels?

The earliest pieces of Christian literature are the letters or epistles of St. Paul, and of these the very earliest is his first epistle to the Thessalonians, which was written about twenty years after the crucifixion. One critic of high authority places the date of its writing at A. D. 52, which would be nineteen years after the crucifixion; another at A. D. 53 and a third at A. D. 48, which would be fifteen years after the crucifixion. About twenty years after, therefore, is a safe statement. This was several years before any of the gospels were written, the earliest of which, that of St. Mark, was written within fifteen years of St. Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians, and the other gospels later. But St. Paul had not been one of Christ's personal disciples in Galilee or Jerusalem, and he had no personal memories to relate of Christ's miracles and teaching. His letters were doctrinal rather than historical, more educational than personal.

What is the present strength of the American Federation of Labor? What is its main object?

It comprises 113 national and international unions, representing approximately 27,000 local unions, 5 departments, 42 state branches, 615 city central unions and 673 local unions. The paid membership is nearly 2,000,000. (2) The object and aim of the federation is officially stated to render employment and means of subsistence less precarious by securing to the workers an equitable share of the fruits of their labor.

Please state how many mints are in the United States and where they are located; also the assay offices and where they are located.

There are three mints, located at Philadelphia, San Francisco and Denver. There are two assay offices, at Carson City and New Orleans.

BAD ROADS CAUSE GREAT LOSS.

Bad roads cost the United States \$7,500,000,000 per annum is the reported estimate of the highway commissioner of Ohio. He figures that the average cost of hauling one ton one mile on a good, hard road is 8 cents, while the present average cost is 23 cents, and in some districts it is as high as 54 cents. There is no doubt respecting the economy of good roads, but such estimating as the commissioner offers takes no account of the capital outlay necessary to get the roads. If the latter be built under the auspices and in the ways that have prevailed in the state of New York, there may be a loss of money instead of a saving. The matter is one of great importance to many mining districts, wherein wagon transportation is a high charge on ore production under present conditions and where auto trucks can offer but little help until the roads are improved.—Engineering and Mining Journal.

OILED ROADS FAIL UNDER HEAVY TRAFFIC.

Only a Small Proportion Constructed Has Been Successful.

As a matter of fact a very small proportion of the total area of oiled macadam pavement constructed has been successful. Under heavy traffic it ruts and waves very badly. It is my opinion that, even under the best conditions, this pavement has little justification. Oil has more lubricating than binding properties, and its introduction into a macadam pavement has a tendency to destroy the stability of the metal, writes an expert in the Engineering News. The successful examples of pavements of this class have been either in localities where climatic conditions are such as to evaporate the more volatile parts of the oil or where the application has been made in such a manner as to achieve the same result. Oiled macadam roads which have become so rutted as to be almost impassable have been converted into fairly good pavements by scarifying and rerolling, thereby aerating the oil and causing the evaporation of the lighter constituents.

For residence streets Oklahoma, Cal., is using exclusively some type of oil-macadam. The oil-macadam heretofore most generally used consists of the ordinary amount of macadam rock, compacted and treated with two applications of heavy road oil, aggregating one and one-half gallons to the square yard. The amount of oil is sufficient to produce an oil bound surface of about three inches in depth. This type of pavement requires careful workmanship, particularly in the matter of securing a pavement firm enough to carry heavy loads and at the same time sufficiently porous to admit the oil. With a widely differing character of the stone in common use, the daily changing weather conditions and the disagreement among experts as to the proper method of building oil-macadam streets, this attempt to build a two course macadam in one operation has been a serious problem. Results have generally been good, in many cases ideal, and in a few cases defects have developed.

ROAD BUILDING MACHINE.

New Self Propelled Device is a Remarkable Invention.

A \$30,000 self propelled road building machine recently successfully tested abroad is reported to perform wonderful feats. The engine which does all the work is a six cylinder distillate burning gas engine of eighty horsepower, which operates a series of bucket chains that dig the soil to any depth down to eighteen inches, and the tooth armed buckets are so powerful that they will cut through a finished pavement if it be desired to rebuild old streets.

The earth is picked up by these buckets, carried to a mixer in the body of the machine and thoroughly combined with any desired binder, hot asphaltum or crude oil, and is then spread evenly and rolled in one operation. A trailer containing the binder follows the machine, and it is necessary to have a string of them in readiness, as the device operates with great speed. The earth is dug up, mixed, re-rolled and rolled at the rate of fifty square feet a minute for an eight inch depth of asphalt pavement.

A very advantageous feature of this method of mixing is that it is uniform from base to surface, so that there is no danger of the surface's buckling. Of course where the mixture includes crushed rock it is necessary to spread the material before the machine. The chains of buckets are independent of each other, and as each has a width of six inches it is possible to form various combinations for roads of different widths.

Convicts in Highway Work.

The employment of able-bodied male convicts in highway work is recommended in the preliminary report which has recently been filed by the New York state commission on prison reform, appointed by the governor about a year ago. Several other employments are recommended for the convicts, and the conduct of all work possible under the so called honor system is favored.

A Business Proposition

If the liquor traffic aids business, why do the commercial organizations and railroads when issuing pamphlets to advertise a state, community or city

tell about the Schools, Churches, Libraries, Banks, Mills, Factories, Farm Products, Timber, Mines, Railway Lines, Natural Resources, Climate, Scenery, Etc.

and forget about the Breweries, Distilleries, Saloons, "Cafes," Gambling Houses, Brothels, ---and their products.

If all these are necessary, WHY DISCRIMINATE?

PEPPERY COMPOSERS.

Masters of Music Who Had Nice Tempers of Their Own.

Even in the presence of his royal pupils Handel would sometimes fly into most violent passions. "You forget yourself, Mr. Handel," a court attendant said reprovingly on one such occasion. "You should show more respect to her royal highness!" "Royal highness!" snorted the musician contemptuously. "Bah! De respect is due to me! There are many princesses, but only one Handel!"

On another occasion, when George I. sent a message summoning him to an interview, he returned this answer: "Tell his majesty he must wait. By the time he is bored imberdant dan his!"

Viotti, the famous French musician of the eighteenth century, had an equal contempt for royalty and an exaggerated opinion of himself, as the following story shows: One day he was summoned to Versailles to play before Marie Antoinette and the court. The performance had begun; the opening bars of his favorite solo commanded breathless attention, when a cry was heard:

"Place for Mgr. the Comte d'Artois!"

At the sound Viotti immediately ceased playing, cast an indignant glance at his audience, placed his violin under his arm and walked out of the place.

When Marie Antoinette once inquired of Gluck how his new opera was progressing he answered, "Madame, it is nearly finished, and I assure you it will be superb," a conceit which was rivaled by that of Meyerbeer, who, when a friend declared that if any thing better could be composed than one of his rival operas he would dance on his head, answered, "If that is so I should advise you to start practicing at once, for I have just commenced the fourth act of 'The Hugenots!'"

Even Haydn, usually the most modest of men, showed at times that he had as good an opinion of his own merits as any of his admirers. On one occasion, when a friend said to him of his "Salomon" symphonies, "Sir, I am strongly of opinion that you will never surpass these wonderful symphonies," he answered placidly, "No; I never mean to attempt the impossible!"

CURIOS CARD TRICK.

It Deals With Odd Numbers, and the Explanation is a Mystery.

There is a puzzle which may be performed with any odd number of objects, playing cards being usually employed, and which any one can do, but no one seems able to explain the reason for it. Let us suppose the number selected to be twenty-seven cards, although fifteen or twenty-one would do just as well.

After having them shuffled hold them in the left hand face upward and then deal them face upward one at a time in three piles so that the fourth card comes on the first and the fifth on the top of the second and so on until you have three piles of nine cards each.

Request any person who is watching you to make a silent note of any card he pleases, and when you have finished dealing to tell you in which pile the card lies. By picking up the three piles again one at a time as before, the noted card will reappear. Ask in which

pile it came that time and pile in the middle as before.

Upon dealing the cards into three piles for the third time note carefully the card that comes in the middle of each pile. With twenty-seven there will be nine in each pile and the fifth will be the middle card. Now, when the person who selected the card names the pile in which his card comes you will know it was the middle card of that pile. With this knowledge in your possession you can finish the trick in any manner you please.

This is only a statement of results, but what is the explanation or reason for it? What is the rule that makes it always come out right, regardless of the number of objects used, so that it is odd?—New York Sun.

Where the Fault Lay.

A newspaper man tells of a friend who edited, with more or less success, a paper in a small town. That he was somewhat discouraged by the lack of interest shown in his journal was evidenced by this notice which one afternoon appeared on the editorial page:

"Burglars entered our house last night. To the everlasting shame of the community for whose welfare we have labored, be it said, they got nothing."—Harper's Magazine.

Bewildered Him.

"I say, Weggie, I'm in an awful mess. Miss Smart means to sue me for 'bweath of p'omise' or somethin' howwid like that."

"Weally?"

"Yans I said I was awfully sowwy not to ask her to maawwy me, bft dad would cut me off if I did, and all she said was, 'You needn't imagine I'm the kind of a girl that accepts an apology for a man.'"

Athletic Vocalization.

"Is a ventriloquist a person who throws his voice?" asked Mr. Lobrow.

"So to speak."

"Well, we've got one next door to us. She hasn't thrown it yet, but she is giving it a terrible struggle."—Washington Star.

Shrank From the Job.

Angry Customer—You certainly took an execrable photograph of me. Photographer—But, sir, my plates are sensitive ones.—Baltimore American.

Every one learns from his own experience; the wise learn also from the experience of others.

Natural Objection.

"Why won't that rich old curmudgeon let his young wife act in amateur theatricals?"

"Because the last time she took part everybody raved about the way she acted a merry widow part."—Baltimore American.

Getting in the Picture.

"Some have greatness thrust upon them."

"I know. They blundered accidentally into a film."—Kansas City Journal.

A Compromise.

Fond Hobby (starting down town)—What will it be, love—flowers or candy? Wife—We'll compromise, dear. You can send both.—Judge.

Nothing is possible to him who is always dreaming of his past possibilities.

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