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OUR SECRETARIES OF WAR.

Only a Few of Them Had Any Practical Military Experience.

The first secretary of war of the United States was Henry Knox, who was born in Boston July 26, 1750, of Scotch Irish parentage. Knox was the chief commander of the artillery throughout the Revolution and was secretary of war both before and after Washington assumed the presidency, being one of the few soldiers appointed to that position.

His successor, Timothy Pickens, had also seen active service, and James McHenry, the third to hold the post, had been a surgeon in the Revolution. Samuel Dexter, the next in line, was a lawyer, but Henry Dearborn, Jefferson's secretary of war, had had much military experience. William Buxton, appointed by Madison, was a physician and gave way to a military man, John Armstrong. James Monroe and William H. Crawford were lawyers, and since their time most presidents have apparently considered a legal education the best qualification for a head of the war department.

U. S. Grant, who held the war portfolio for a brief period in 1867, and William T. Sherman, whose tenure of office was equally short, were the only distinguished military men to hold the post within the last half century.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

STORY OF THE PENNY GIRL.

Likeness on the Old Cent Was That of Sarah Longacre.

In 1835 the government of the United States made an offer of \$1,000 for the most acceptable design to be placed upon the new one cent coin soon to be issued. Some Indian chiefs traveled from the northwest to Philadelphia to inspect the mint, whose chief engraver was James Barton Longacre, who invited them to his house.

The engraver's daughter, Sarah, ten years old, greatly enjoyed the visit of her father's guests, and during the evening, to please her, one of the chiefs took his feathered helmet and war bonnet and placed it on her head. In the company was an artist, who immediately sketched her and handed the picture to her father. Mr. Longacre, knowing of the competition for a likeness to go upon the cent, resolved to enter the sketch for the prize offered by the government. To his delight, the officials accepted it, and the face of his daughter appeared upon the coin.

The face of Sarah Longacre has gone into more hands, more pockets, more homes, more stores—yes, more churches—than any other coin in the United States, if not in the world.—Pittsburgh Leader.

Disraeli and Gladstone.

Mr. Shaw Leslie, an Irish author, tells the following:
 "My grandfather witnessed an effective piece of play in the house during a duel between Disraeli and Gladstone. During a heated fight of oratory Gladstone upset some pens on the table between them. Disraeli rose and, calling attention to the fact, slowly replaced them one by one. The effect of Gladstone's speech was lost by the time Disraeli had finished."

Speaking of Dickens and Thackeray, Mr. Leslie says:

"My grandfather recalled the ludicrous incident which brought them together. As they both left the Athenaeum, unknown to each other they seized the same hat. The effect was ludicrous enough to appeal even to professional humorists, and they shook hands."

Eggs Sterilized by Gas.

A method of preserving eggs which is said to keep them absolutely fresh for an indefinite length of time is in use in France. New laid eggs in tin cases holding 1,000 each are placed in an autoclave, from which the air is exhausted until all the gas within the shells has been drawn out. Then carbonic acid gas and nitrogen are introduced from tanks of these gases in liquid form, and the tins containing the eggs are sealed with solder. Any germs of decay are killed by these gases, and it is said that the flavor of the eggs is in no way affected.

Canals of Venice.

The canals of Venice are a part of the Adriatic sea. The city is built on 118 small islands or shoals in the gulf of Venice. These islands are connected by several hundred bridges, and the direction of the canals, of which there are nearly 200, are so formed as to constitute the "highways." Thus it is due to the situation of this city and not to special intention of man that it has canals instead of paved streets.

His Day Off.

"Who is that gentleman listening with such keen delight to a ragtime selection by the band?"
 "That's Mr. Duffersby. His wife and daughters are very musical. If they were present they would clap their hands to their ears and pretend to be suffering."—Spokane Review.

Departed Warmth.

"What have you there?"
 "A package of old love letters."
 "Going to burn them?"
 "Yes. When I wrote these missives they were so fervent I had an idea they might be ignited by spontaneous combustion, but I guess I'll have to use a match after all."—Spokane Review.

That Held Him.

He—I shall not marry a woman unless she is my exact opposite. She—You will never find so perfect a being as that.—Life.

The true art of memory is the art of attention.—Johnson.

LIFE IN ROUMANIA

A Nation of Peasants, With Curious Customs and Beliefs.

RULED BY SIGNS AND OMENS.

Many Superstitions Enter into the Everyday Life of This People, Who Are Little Given to Money Thrift. The Way a Lad Goes A-courting.

The great bulk of Roumania's population belongs to the peasant class, for there are comparatively few cities, and most of them are small," says a bulletin of the National Geographic society on Roumanian folklore and customs, which gives an intimate insight into the home life of that nation. The bulletin, which is based on a communication to the society from John Oliver LaGorce, says:

"Many of these peasants live on the great estates, where their forebears for generations have farmed for the absentee landlords. And an interesting class these peasants form, with their peculiar customs, their primitive ways of looking at things in general.

"The evil of race suicide has never invaded rural Roumania. It is regarded as worthy of honor to be the head of a large family. As in all lands where many of the people are more or less illiterate, there is a high death rate, though the fact that the bottle fed baby is almost unknown in peasant Roumania tends to overcome the high infant mortality that would otherwise result.

"The average Roumanian peasant is not given to the kind of thrift that leads him often to a savings bank. The patrimony of his sons and daughters is more often good will, good health and an honest mind than it is land or money or houses. So narrow is the margin upon which a young couple starts out in life that it has come to be a proverb among them. 'Married today and out at the elbows tomorrow,' for children come apace, and the prices of the things the peasant has to sell are even lower than the prices of those he has to buy, and not until his own labors are supplemented by those of his sons and daughters has he much chance to prepare for even the shortest of rainy days.

"When a young Roumanian peasant lad's thoughts turn to love and his mind begins to incline toward marriage he goes to his mother rather than to his sweetheart with his tale. The mother acts as an ambassador to the father, and if he can be induced to look with favor upon the lover's choice he calls in two of his best friends in the village, tells them of his son's intentions and asks them to accompany the said son to the house of the girl. 'Mayhap the girl herself has not accepted from the youth a single hint of his love; but, even so, all he and his spokesmen approach the home who suspects the object of his visit and people through any crack or cranny that is convenient.'

"If it happens to be winter the father of the girl invites the company in and, surmising their mission, gives some hint as to his attitude by the way he looks after the fire. If he keeps it burning brightly they know that he is favorable; if he lets it die down a little they understand that he is only of an open mind on the subject. But if he lets it go out entirely there is no use arguing the question.

"The Roumanian peasant is much given to superstition, and he has a sign for everything. If shingles are not nailed on a roof in the proper sign they will turn up at the ends; if potatoes are not planted in the proper sign they will grow on top of the soil and be a failure; if you have money in your pocket when you see the new moon you will not 'go broke,' at least not until another new moon has come. On the other hand, it is held to be dangerous to announce to those in the house that the new moon has appeared, for in that case all the pots and pans in the kitchen will be broken before the waning moon passes.

"When a peasant child is christened all of those present assume the relation of godparents, and it is a superstition that there must be no intermarriages between godfathers and godmothers. The result is that christenings are not widely attended, and those with matrimonial ambitions eschew them entirely.

"The utmost care is taken by some to prevent a child from seeing its image in a mirror before it is three years old, for if it does it will become a victim of the 'falling sickness,' which will send it stumbling through life.

"There are many customs which still proclaim the olden time rule and influence of ancient Rome that have persisted through the centuries since the departure of her glory. For instance, there is the old Pyrrhic dance, the robes with bells on sleeves and girdles. The Roumanians still shout in unison to prevent Saturn from hearing the voice of the infant Jupiter, and even their oxen proclaim the 'glory that was Rome' in their names, for here you may see Caesar and Brutus as joke-fellows and there Cassius and Augustus."

The Later Education.

"Well, how did things come out in your school contest?"
 "Trife mixed. A girl won the hammer throwing contest, and a boy took first prize for fruit cake."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Worry is a blunder that blackens all around and makes life a regret.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS.

Fill Whatever Job You Hold to the Best of Your Ability.

"In climbing the ladder of success what have you learned that you could pass on as aid to other struggling young men?" I asked H. P. Davison of J. P. Morgan & Co. "Did you conceive any shining goal and bend everything to getting there?"

"No," he replied emphatically. "Whatever job I had was to me always the very best job in the world, and I tried to fill it. I made no elaborate plans for the future. If I had any system in my labor it was first to do my own work; second, to teach the fellow below me how to take my place; third, to learn how to fill the position ahead of me.

"Boys and young men should not imagine that their work is so unimportant that nobody takes note of how they do it. It does not take long to find out whether a boy is on his toes watching how he can best be of help in a situation or whether he merely sits down and waits to be told what to do. The simple virtues of willingness, readiness, alertness and courtesy will carry a boy farther than mere smartness.

"Perhaps it will not be out of place for me to describe an incident which may carry a lesson for the young men you are anxious to help. One day when I was taller a customer offered me a very fine gold pen. I went right into the office and asked if this man had any loan from the bank. I explained that he had asked me to accept the gift. The bank promptly acted, and it was not long before the fellow was in bankruptcy. The simple course I took saved the bank a good deal of money."—B. C. Forbes in Leslie's.

EQUINE ARTFUL DODGERS.

Deafness and Lameness That Were Just Pure Bluff.

We all know, of course, the livery nag who pretends to be deaf. You tell him to "get up," and he getteth not up; you cluck to him, and he accelerateth not his pace. Is he deaf? Not he. You know, by a certain rolling of his eye and wiggling of his ears, that he hears you perfectly well. His deafness is pure bluff. It is like the lameness which some shrewd old nags sometimes put on.

Will a horse pretend to be lame when he is not? Some horses certainly will. Two or three years ago the Nomad was driving a livery nag on a road in Vermont, when the animal suddenly began to limp terribly; couldn't go off a slow walk. It was pretty serious, for a journey of about twenty miles had just been begun. Knowing a man on the road who was a practical horseman, the Nomad drove up to his door and submitted the animal to the expert's examination. The man looked at the horse's feet, examined his legs—looked him over thoroughly. "Did the horse go all right when you started out?" he asked. "Yes; the horse had gone all right for three or four miles. Well," said the expert, "this horse is shamming; there is nothing the matter with him."

Then he addressed some plain language to Dobbin, advising him with some sharpness to cut it all out and go along as he ought to. The Nomad touched the horse with the whip, and he trotted on to the end of the journey without the slightest limp.—Nomad in Boston Transcript.

Swearing on the Bible.

The method of swearing by the Bible came into use at a very early period, practically with the establishment of courts of law in Christian countries. It was the ordinary method of swearing when America was settled by Europeans and was naturally adopted here. Oaths were common before the Christian era, and any form may be used that conforms to the religious belief of the person to be sworn. Hebrews are often sworn on the Pentateuch, keeping on their hats, and their oath ends with the words, "So help me, Jehovah." A Mohammedan is sworn on the Koran.—Philadelphia Press.

He Made the Sale.

"Yes, the property is cheap enough. Why do you want to sell it?"
 "You won't give me away?"
 "No."

"Well, sir, it's because I'm the only man in this neighborhood that doesn't move in high society, and I'm lonesome."—Chicago Tribune.

Sample.

"George didn't keep his engagement with me last night," said the girl who was betrothed to him.

"I'd give him a piece of my mind," said her mother.

"Just a little sample of married life," suggested father.—Cleveland Leader.

A Biting Sentiment.

You have to be careful even about paying compliments." Bill Mixer, who used to write ads. for a tobacco house, got himself in bad when he started writing copy for a butter concern and wrote "Guaranteed not to bite the tongue."—Boston Globe.

A Real Autocrat.

"Here's the photograph of a famous maitre d'hotel. He has a stern and haughty look."

"Hasn't he, though? I dare say that fellow wouldn't unbend for any tip less than a \$100 bill."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Car on the Brain.

"Do you know how to handle an emergency?"
 "Is that going to be one of the new makes?"—Baltimore American.

The feeble howl with the wolves, bray with the asses and bleat with the sheep.—Roland.

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