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Play of Oedipus Rex Is Tremendous Tragedy

The play begins. The crowd enters, the people driven by pestilence toward their king and toward the gods, writes Stark Young in the North American Review. The prophet comes; a curse is on the land. Oedipus sets out upon the search that is to be his fate. The woman who is his mother and also his wife throws herself between Oedipus and this knowledge that will destroy them all. And, finally, in shame and frenzy Jocasta hangs herself, and Oedipus with the clasp of her mantle digs out his eyes. He enters then in that most terrible shudder in all drama; he feels the pain, his voice floats far from him, shame in this world and in the next he feels, everything; even his children are taken from him, and he goes out to wander alone over the world. And meanwhile the chorus has sung and moved, and carried into a wider region the events of the play and the thoughts of the characters. The music of the instruments has widened yet further the whole, giving it a yet more general and essential abstraction and seeming to spread upon it an aspect of the eternal. The changing lines of the chorus and the actors have rendered less obscure the poet's desire, and all his thought; the Salamis or inland wind, blowing another rhythm into those bright garments, has carried into universal space that flow of movement under the wide light.

What Proof Marks on Old Firearms Mean

Those unfamiliar with ancient firearms are frequently puzzled by finding certain characters or letters, or both, stamped on and into the barrel of a gun or pistol. In their ignorance they take them to be the initials or mark of the maker, and from these seek to gain light as to his name. It is true that Spanish and German arms usually have, instead of the maker's name, a seal, frequently of gold, depicting characters—animals and letters—from which, if possessed of a list of such seals, one might determine the manufacture of the weapon, and hence its approximate date. English and French gunmakers, however, if marking the arm at all, did so by placing their name and that of their town on the lock-plate or barrel, or on both.

The marks known as "proof marks" were stamped on, usually by a government official, after he had tried out and "proven" the arm to be all right. As a rule the method of "proving" was to load the piece with several times its normal amount of powder and shot, and then discharge the same. If it survived the test it was considered "proven" satisfactorily. Thus, as different marks were not adopted until a certain date, we may ordinarily be assured that an arm bearing them was not manufactured before that date.—Lewis Appleton Barker in Adventure Magazine.

Myth of Ptolemy's Mirror

Ptolemy's mirror was a huge mirror, said to have been placed in the tower of the Pharos of Alexandria by Ptolemy Evergetes.

Abolfeda, the famous Arabian writer, says that this mirror was made of Chinese iron, and that shortly after the Saracen conquest of Egypt it was destroyed by the Christians to prevent its falling into the hands of their oppressors. In Buffon's opinion, says the Detroit News, Ptolemy's mirror was made of polished steel.

According to a fabulous account, it reflected the greater part of lower Egypt and a portion of the Mediterranean sea and enabled the observer to detect either the approach of a hostile fleet or the existence of a disturbance on land.

The Lunatic

A man called at our office the other day and said:

"I want ask about my income tax. If you know."

"Ah!" we sighed, sympathetically.

"I want know," he said, "about this. Last year I had t' borrow money t' pay th' tax on my income; this year I had t' borrow money t' pay that back and pay this year's taxes, and next year I got to sell my house t' pay 'em all and my taxes. Now, how much does the government owe me for what I ain't got?"

We murmured appreciatively and motioned for the bouncer. These troubled ones really bother us a lot! —Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Teaches His Child Wife

In Stanford, Ky., there is a curious situation of a school teacher having among his pupils, all children, his own wife, a girl just sixteen. He was discovered recently because he endeavored to make his wife-pupil write on the blackboard: "I have never kissed any other man but my husband." The teacher is Melvin Wright and he gained notoriety also for whipping his wife when she broke a school rule.

Exactly

Counsel—Now where did he kiss you?
Plaintiff—On the lips, sir.
Counsel—No! No! you don't understand. I mean, where were you?
Plaintiff (blushing)—In his arms, sir.—Georgia Tech. Yellow Jacket.

The Way It Goes

Mrs. Tellum—That bit of gossip you told me about Mrs. Miggs wasn't true.
Mrs. Spreadit—Well, I didn't much believe it at the time, but I thought I might as well pass it along.—Woman's Home Companion.

Says Engine Whistles Need to Be Improved

A whistle is only a whistle, but even a whistle is susceptible to improvement. Locomotive whistles in particular are open to criticism, according to Prof. Arthur L. Foley of Indiana university, says the New York World. Professor Foley is head of the physics department and also of the Waterman Institute for Scientific Research at the university.

Professor Foley's objection to the present type of locomotive whistle is twofold. It criticizes both the tone and the position. His suggestion for improvements are based on discoveries made during a series of researches into sound intensity and cost of operation of many types of whistle. The article continues as follows:

The popular "chime" whistle, with its comparatively low-pitched notes, he maintains, is only about one-sixth as effective a warning as would be a high-pitched single note.

As for the position, Professor Foley contends that it's all wrong. The ordinary whistle has in front of it the smokestack, bell, steam dome and electric generator, not to speak of a blanket of hot gases.

The result is that its sound is broadcast to the sides of the track instead of directly ahead where it is desired. By altering the position and changing the note many lives could be saved.

Another factor against the chime type of whistle is its cost. According to Professor Foley's calculations it takes 2,434,026 tons of coal per year to utter the toots of the nation's engines.

The adoption of a shrill, single-tone whistle would effect, according to his figures, an annual saving in railroad coal bills of approximately \$5,000,000.

Tact Makes an Honest Employee of a Thief

A salesgirl in a department store was caught stealing. The superintendent confronted her with the evidence and asked her to sign a confession. After she had done so, he sealed the confession in an envelope and put his own name on it.

"This goes into a strong box," he said, "and nobody but you and I will ever know about it—provided you do what I ask. First, I want your promise never to do it again and then I want to know just why you thought you must have more money." She told her story. There was sickness at home, and her need for money was not because of mere craving for luxuries. The superintendent sent her invalid sister to a hospital at the store's expense.

That was nine years ago, and the salesgirl is today not only one of the store's valuable employees but one of the most loyal. The little envelope has been burned long ago.—Nation's Business.

Lagniappe

Cupid has less to do and more to regret than most gods.

Yesterday we scoffed at airships. Hard work has its good points, mostly calloused.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

World's Highest Phone Station on Monte Rosa

It appears that the highest telephone station in the world is that of the meteorological observatory on top of Monte Rosa, the Alps, at a height of 15,450 feet. Since the station is occupied only for a short period each year, the poles carrying the telephone wire are removed at the end of each season and re-erected when this is required.

It is interesting to know that the unusual conditions of weather which are met with in the mountain region do not hinder, but, on the other hand, really favor the operation of the telephone line. Short poles are used and at the center of each span the wire touches the snow, but as the snow is quite dry it is a good insulator and no leakage troubles are found.

Indeed, the final section of the line, from the Col du Lys to the peak, is simply laid across the snow without the use of any other support. Where the poles are used, to prevent any breakage of the wire, owing to movements of the glacier, the line is carried through rings on the poles and is not attached fast to the insulators. The line crosses two valleys, each about 3,300 feet wide, and naturally they must be crossed by a single span. But the depth of the ravines is so great that the sag of the wires is of no importance.—Washington Star.

Instruments Not Sociable

Band instruments have personal peculiarities all their own, says John Philip Sousa in Farm and Fireside. They are like guests at a party. A clever hostess knows that certain people will clash, and she plans her social affairs accordingly. So must a composer, or a leader who "arranges" the music that he plays, have care lest his instruments quarrel.

The lurid trombone, the heroic clarinet, and the sentimental French horn each have their value in the band instrument social world. But they cannot be thrown together casually. Imagine a dainty and sweet musical love story interrupted by the blare of a trombone! The poor lovers would be completely discomposed, and the auditor would never find them again. The image would be destroyed.

Skilled and clever composers and conductors sometimes make "social errors" in instrumentation that are quite as ludicrous and quite as destructive of social accord as are the errors of an inept hostess.

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