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Egyptian Barber Had First Idea of Organ

More than two thousand years ago a barber in Alexandria discovered that in moving his mirror air was forced through the tubes which were common in mirrors at that time. This caused a curious musical sound to be emitted. So struck was he by this peculiarity that he set about making an instrument which was the foundation of the modern organ.

After several experiments he made a water-flute, in which air was forced by bellows through an inverted cone which led to flutes controlled by a keyboard, the pressure being kept uniform by water.

After a thousand years a rival instrument made its appearance. This was of a similar pattern, but, instead of water, weights regulated the pressure.

In 951 an organ was erected at Winchester. It had twenty-six bellows and ten pipes to each key. The two men who sat at the keyboard "blew and sweated enormously." Later, a firm of organ makers in Germany succeeded in erecting the first really big instrument. The primary stops did not differ very much from those of today, although various novelties were introduced.

Among the innovations were the nightingale and cuckoo stops, while others represented cock-crowing and goat-bleating. Though these novelties have now fallen into disuse, an organ with one of these nightingale stops is still to be seen in Rome.

First "Flying" Feat Rather Crude Affair

A slate tablet in the yard of Old North church, Boston, marks the place from which the first flying feat in this country was made. The flight was accomplished by John Childs, an Englishman, who had become famous for his gliding flights from the tops of steeples. His glider was a crude affair, the operator being suspended by a sort of harness. The length of the flight was about 700 feet. It was successfully repeated. The inscription on the tablet reads: "Here, on Sept. 13, 1757, John Childs, who had given public notice of his intention to fly from the steeple of Dr. Cutler's church, performed it to the satisfaction of a great number of spectators. In 1923, the year of the first continuous flight across the continent, this tablet has been placed by the Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames, to commemorate the two events."

Puzzled Germans

There was once an operator at the Crookhaven wireless station named Binns, whose breakfasts for 365 days every year consisted of two hard-boiled eggs. During the war he was an operator in a very important position in the grand fleet and a certain most secret signal was required to be sent. He was puzzled for a moment, and then, with his hand upon the Morse key, tapped out the extraordinary words, which no doubt puzzled every German listening in: "Two hard-boiled eggs transmitting. Urgent." He rapped this out half a dozen times and the stations around the coast were much mystified. But Crookhaven stations sprang alert at once. They knew it was Binns. They took his secret message for the admiralty and replied: "O. K. Two hard-boiled eggs." The result of that code message was claimed to be the sinking of a German cruiser, writes William Le Queux in "Things I Know."

Two Claim Quotation

In her book entitled "Borrowings," Mrs. Sarah Yule credits the quotation "If a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door" to Emerson. She said she copied it in a notebook from a lecture delivered by the great philosopher. But the quotation was the occasion of a long controversy, owing to Elbert Hubbard's claim to its authorship. Hubbard stated positively upon two different occasions that he was the author of the quotation. Mrs. Yule's book was published in 1889. It appears that Hubbard's claim was not made until later.

Useful Sunflower

A vessel recently docked at Hull, England, with a cargo of 2,000 tons of sunflower seeds. These seeds yield a valuable food for cattle and poultry, and the oil expressed from them is almost equal in its qualities to olive oil. The doctor depends upon them for one of his soporifics, while in the east of Europe they steep them in boiling water to serve as an infant's food. The Indians used to grind them into a flour for making bread. Even the stems and leaves can be utilized, the former as a cattle food, the latter as fuel, while the ashes left form a valuable manure.

Ostrich Legend "Bunk"

The ostrich does not hide its head in the sand when fear afflicts it. This, at any rate, is the bold proclamation made by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, in an article in American Mercury. Nowhere has a responsible observer ever seen an ostrich thrust its head into the sand to escape a foe.

The legend has persisted for nearly 2,000 years. Perhaps 2,000 years hence, despite all the naturalists and all the iconoclasts, people will still believe that ostriches are as silly as Pliny thought they were.

PEARL DIVERS ENJOY DAYS OF AFFLUENCE

Spend With Prodigality
When Fortune Smiles.

Pearl diving off the island of Hikueru in the South seas has yielded rich returns during the season just closed. Both pearl shells and pearls of high value have been found in large numbers in the waters of the lagoon.

These pearl oyster beds had been under restriction for a number of years and for that reason the jewel crop was unusually good.

The diving is done by natives who have trained themselves from childhood to descend under water a long time. No diving machines are permitted.

The Tahiti merchants establish stations at the island during the season to buy the shells and to sell provisions and luxuries to the divers and their families. Representatives from Paris jewelry houses always are on hand to compete for the better quality of pearls. Pearls of lesser value fall into the hands of the speculatively inclined Chinese and European schooner captains. From long experience the natives are fully aware of the value of their finds, so that not many bargains are available.

The South sea island native reacts to prosperity ostentatiously. The wife of the successful diver parades the white coral beach of Hikueru clad in brilliant silks, high-heeled shoes, picture hats and the most costly Chinese shawls. In the island of Boru Boru, where the high price of vanilla beans has raised growers of that staple to temporary affluence, the Chinese shawl has been appropriated by the men as the insignia of great riches. It is worn draped around the neck, with the embroidered ends hanging gracefully down the back and chest. The real vanilla barons wear, in addition, a second shawl of a different color about the waist.

Many stories of lucky finds at Hikueru have drifted into Papeete. One tells how the keeper of a semaphore signal at Papeete, who went to the island on a holiday, happened to see a large pearl oyster lying in shallow water near the beach, dived for it, and on opening it found a pearl for which he received 15,000 francs. Another relates that an old native woman, while fishing on the reef, stubbed her toe against an oyster that yielded a gem worth \$1,000 gold.

Riches, however, never do a Tahitian native any permanent good. They are dissipated immediately in fine clothes, cases of tinned salmon (no native will wet his toes in the sea in search of fish if canned salmon can be had), guitars, accordions, and all manner of trivial amusements.

Then, when the tide of affluence has ebbed, the Tahitian returns to his loin cloth and his bread-fruit and fish diet until another crop of cupra or vanilla has matured, or the restriction has been taken off another pearl island. But in the prosperous era he has lived gorgeously.

Turn About Fair Play

Former Senator Albert Beveridge, who lives in Indianapolis, telephoned a next-door neighbor one day upon whom he had never deigned to pay a neighborly call.

"Your little dog and my little dog seem to have become very friendly," he said. "That's nice, but they begin their flirtatious barking so early in the morning that they annoy my sick wife. I wonder if you'd be kind enough to keep your little dog in, say, till about nine o'clock?"

"Certainly, Mr. Beveridge, certainly," replied his neighbor. "But, Mr. Beveridge, since your little dog and my little dog call on each other, don't you think their masters could follow suit?"

There was a gasp and then a chuckle, and that evening Mr. Beveridge strolled over for a neighborly call.

Making Progress

Hiram walked four miles over the mountain to call on the lady of his dreams. For a long time they sat silent on a bench by the side of her log cabin home; but soon the moon, as moons do, had its effect and Hiram sidled closer to her and picked up her hand.

"Mary," he began, "I know I got a good clearin' over thar an' a team an' wagon an' some haws an' cows, an' I call 'em on buildin' a house this fall an'—"

Here he was interrupted by Mary's mother, who had awakened.

"Mary!" she called in a loud voice. "Is that young man thar yet?"

Back came the answer, "No, ma, but he's gittin' thar."—Everybody's Magazine.

Very Deep

Since Jean Ware, the noted horticulturist, is spending most of her time in her Hollywood foothills garden, she permits her husband to look after many of the household details, when he's home. The result was that Frank unwittingly bought a head of cabbage, mistaking it for lettuce.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Jean, "you must have bought that from an itinerant peddler!"

"I don't think so," protested Frank. "He looked to me like an Italian."

—Los Angeles Times.

Older and Wiser

"When I was a young man I worked 12 hours a day."

Son—I admire your youthful energy, dad, but I admire still more the mature wisdom which led you to stop it.
—The Continent.

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