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9 Reasons for World Leadership

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Odd "Jumping" Customs in Various Countries

"Jumping" customs are to be found in numerous countries among the superstitious peasantry. In Russia, on Midsummer eve, young men and maidens carrying a straw figure of a mythical hero, jump over a bonfire in couples. This act is supposed to help the crops. In Baganda, South Africa, when the beans are ripe, a woman calls upon her eldest son to eat some of them which she has cooked. If she neglects to do this it is believed that she will fall ill. After the meal her husband must jump over her. Following this the beans may be eaten with impunity by the family. These people also treat fishing ceremoniously. The first catch of the season is devoted to the god Musasa. The second catch is taken home and, after the fish have been cooked and eaten, the man of the family jumps over his wife and all is well. Otherwise, distress may ensue. In Uganda, when a warrior returns to his home after a campaign, his first act is to jump over his wife. Before starting out on a warlike expedition each general must jump over his wife, or disaster will befall.

Ring Lore

The origin of the finger ring reaches back to ancient Greek mythology. Prometheus is said to have worn the first ring. Prometheus stole fire from Heaven with which to cook his food and so brought upon himself the displeasure of Jupiter, who condemned the daring mortal to be chained forever to a rock. Jupiter later repented and released Prometheus, but ordered that lest he might forget his punishment and perhaps dare to steal from the gods, he should always wear a chain about his finger to which a fragment of rock was attached, and thus technically at least, carry out the original sentence of being chained to a rock forever. In this is seen both the origin of the ring and also the practice of setting rings with precious stones.

Early Envelopes

When envelopes were first made the sealing flaps were unglued and were closed by applying at the point of the sealing flap a wafer of sealing wax. About 1840 there appeared on the market envelopes with a small "lick of gum" about half an inch square at the point of the sealing flap, and this very soon supplanted the wafer of wax. When, however, as a still further improvement, some manufacturers began to gum the whole of the sealing flap, many protested against it; and while willing to moisten the small spot of gum, for sanitary reasons they were not willing to "lick" the entire flap. After some time this prejudice was overcome and envelopes with gummed flaps rapidly came into favor.—Pathfinder Magazine.

Scene of Wesley's Labors

The border of Fermanagh county is one of the strongholds of Methodism in Ireland. It came under the personal sway of John Wesley and his influence has never been forgotten. In the course of his missionary visits Wesley crossed the Irish channel no fewer than 42 times, and carried the tenets of his faith even as far west as the county of Limerick. In one of the Wesleyan chapels there a long coaching horn is still hung up in the vestry room. It is not a relic of a sporting parson, but was used in the old days to call in the flock when Wesley or one of his itinerant preachers paid an unexpected visit.

No Change at All

"You've heard of a person being in a quandary, haven't you?" Peterson asked.
 "Sure," replied Brown. "Why?"
 "Well, I just had a letter from an old friend, and he's in one. He's been in rather bad health for some time, so the other day he went to see a doctor, and the doctor advised him to take two or three months' complete rest. That's where the quandary comes in. He's been working for the government for 15 years and doesn't know where to look for a more complete rest."—American Legion Weekly.

Ancient Plate Prized by Historical Society

The Verendrye plate, a square bit of leaden plate, is said to be the most celebrated bit of matter in South Dakota's history. It reposes in the capitol building at Pierre, in possession of the South Dakota Historical society. It was found buried in the earth near Pierre in 1917.
 This remarkable plate was prepared either in France or in Montreal at the request of the older Verendrye, and in anticipation of the expedition of 1741, which had been planned by his eldest son Pierre, into the Mandan country in the far wilderness of America. It is thought that the explorers planted the plate on the banks of the Missouri, opposite what is now Pierre, on the hill where it was found. It bears, translated from French, this inscription:
 "In the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Louis XV, the most illustrious Lord, the Lord Marquis of Beauharnois being Viceroy, 1751, Pierre Gaultier de Laverendrye placed this."
 —Detroit News.

Freakish Trees

An explorer in the forests of northern India has found a tree that gives an electric shock to any one who touches it. The intensity of the shock varies with the time of day, the current being at its strongest at 2 p. m.

Few people realize the extraordinary properties with which nature has endowed some trees. In Nubia, for example, there is a tree, the sofar, that plays tunes, a startling effect due to the boring of numerous insects at the base of the young shoots. The wind, playing through the tiny apertures, produces a series of flute-like notes.

A Canadian prairie tree, known as the compass tree, is an infallible guide to travelers, the edges of its leaves always pointing north and south.

In Arizona there is a tree which, on being touched, actually ruffles its leaves and tries to scare off the intruder by emitting a sickening odor.

Those Fool Questions

The bright red motorcar skidded violently across the road, shot through a hedge and landed on its side in a roughly plowed field. The driver crawled painfully out of the wreck and stood looking at it, the picture of gloom.

After a while, a passer-by looked through a hole in the hedge.

"Hello!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "Had an accident?"

The motorist bit back the angry words that rose to his lips.
 "Oh, no," he replied, "not at all. The fact is I've just got a new car, so I brought the old one out to bury it. Have you a pick or spade you could lend me? I don't seem to make much headway digging by machinery."

Habits of Silence Inbred

In the old days Ojibway children were taught to be seen and not heard, for to be heard might have meant death. When the scream of the hoot owl or other strange noises came from the woods, they snuggled closer, but kept all the quieter, for the noise which they heard was liable to be the signal of a prowling enemy, and to have cried would have been to have revealed the hiding place of the family or tribe.

Thus through the thousands of years that the Indians lived in constant danger of attack, the habit of silence was bred in the blood. Even now the Ojibway youngster will take a severe jolt without a sound, and even come up smiling.

Theatrical "Run"

"Your show is the worst we have ever had here," said the manager of a theater in a western town as he handed the manager of the touring company his share of the box-office receipts.

"That's strange!" said the manager of the company. "Why, when we played in Omaha we had the longest run in the history of the city!"

"I'm sorry!" replied the manager of the theater.
 "Sorry about what?"
 "Sorry the audience abandoned the cause!"

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