

Mosque Fine Specimen of Arab Architecture

The pride of the Moslem world is the mosque of the Omayyads. It was erected by that famous dynasty of caliphs and rebuilt after its destruction by fire on the occasion of the conquest of Damascus by the Mongol hordes of Tamerlane. It was then that the once famous craft of Damascus swordmakers came to a tragic end, and never since has Damascus produced its famous sword blade, once the most treasured arm of the oriental warrior. The mosque of the Omayyads is a typical specimen of Arab religious architecture, and differs from the Turkish mosques by the absence of the big central cupola. A huge oblong-shaped building, with an open court and quadrangular minarets, its plain exterior is likely to mislead the visitor, who, once within the precincts of the sanctuary, stands dumfounded with an overwhelming impression of splendor. The halls surrounding the court are of such vast dimensions that they hold several chapels of the daintiest structure, which in themselves are large enough to be temples. The floor is covered throughout with the most luxurious carpets.—Edward J. Bing, in Current History Magazine.

Tropical Birds Happy Only When Employed

In the tropical bird house at the Audubon Park zoo, New Orleans, lives a collection of birds said to be the most industrious creatures of all living beings. They are so industrious, say the zoo supervisors, that materials with which the tiny creatures carry on their unceasing labors are withheld from the spacious bird house except during certain hours. When the birds are deprived of this material, known as "raffa," a kind of palm fiber, they become dissatisfied, apparently because they are forced to remain idle.

The birds are known as "weavers," getting their name from the work in which they are so proficient.

The weaver comes from the Transvaal and lake regions of Africa, southern Asia and Australia. When the "raffa" is placed in the bird house the little workers start weaving nests. When the supply of material is exhausted they start tearing down nests already woven and rebuilding them. Thus they occupy themselves until all but exhausted.

Great Vacation

Jones was discussing vacation with his wife. "Doc Parsons tells me," he said, "that a separate vacation is the best for married folk. We've been married now for nearly twenty years. Think of what a change it would be for both of us to get away alone—to see nothing but new faces. A change, a thorough change, is what we require, Doc Parsons says."

His wife was ominously silent. Presently she said: "Very well, William, I consent, but on one condition—that you make this change really thorough by letting me go off on my vacation by myself and you take with you on yours the six children I haven't had out of sight for ten years."

"Humph!" said Jones, and he proceeded to change the subject.—Boston Transcript.

Development of "Specs"

Aristophanes speaks of the burning glass, Pliny mentions solid balls of rock crystal, and Seneca describes their use by engravers. In A. D. 150 Claudius Ptolemaeus wrote a treatise on optics, but after these early times it is difficult to trace the history of the eyeglass for over a thousand years until, in the eleventh century, Alhazan, the Arabian, wrote with considerable knowledge on the subject.

The monks ground up rock crystal into lenses and so introduced the forerunner of the monocle, which was followed by a kind of lorgnette with V-shaped supports, but glasses developed into something like their present form about 600 years ago.

Summer Clouds

As a rule the clouds of midday, seen on a clear day, known as cumulus clouds, have a well-marked straight base. As the ground and the air nearest it begin to warm, the warmed air rises into the higher, cooler regions, where, cooled mainly by its own expansion against the colder air about it, some of its moisture is condensed, forming a cloud. As by continuing ascent more of the stream of air comes in the region of condensation the cloud builds up higher. The base of the cloud remains at the height where condensation begins, which height continues about the same.

Honey as Stimulant

Honey as a medicine was the subject of several speakers at the British honey show, where it was said that doctors in the United States were using the bee product to replace alcohol as a stimulant in the treatment of pneumonia and other illnesses. Honey was said to be an excellent pick-me-up and used with hot milk it is a first-class tonic. One pound of honey was shown to be equal in food value to 23 eggs.

Long Drop

Little Freddie was watching his small brother. "Did Frankie come from heaven, the same as I did?" "Yes, dear," said his mother. "Why do you ask?" "I suppose he must have landed on his feet," replied Freddie. "That's what makes him so bow-legged."

Persian City Leads in Production of Henna

An important industry of Yezd, Persia, is the manufacture of henna. This product is used to wash and color the hair and to stain the finger nails red—yes, many people here have red finger nails. I saw colored lambs, and several horses whose manes and fetlocks were dyed fox red with henna.

Henna leaves come from the south, principally from the Bam district, and Yezd supplies all Persia and the surrounding countries with this dye. The 30 or more henna mills in the city are so completely inclosed that it is difficult to see what goes on within.

In the late evening a camel, covered with henna dust, operates the mill, plodding in a circle in the half darkness. A small round basket covers his eyes to prevent him from getting dizzy. One receives an impression of unreality, of something brought from another world.

The mill is very primitive, standing about six feet high, while the millstone and the circular path around it are sunken. Everything is covered with henna dust. From time to time a little boy shovels the powder into heavy jugs.—Bernhard Kellermann in Berliner Tageblatt (Living Age).

Altogether Too Busy to Seek Prosaic Work

A big, healthy-looking fellow knocked at the kitchen door and asked for something to eat, but the woman was not charitably disposed.

"Why don't you get some work?" she snapped.

"I haven't time, ma'am."

"Haven't time?" she asked in surprise.

"No, ma'am; I'm busy."

"Busy, indeed," she said sarcastically. "I'd like to know what keeps you busy?"

"Tearin' round from house to house, ma'am."

"What?"

"Tearin' round from house to house, ma'am, tryin' to get something to eat, takes up all my time, so I don't have any left to work in. That's the whole truth, ma'am; and K you don't give me a bite I'll have to waste two or three precious hours, ma'am, looking for somebody that will!"

And his nerve saved him.—London Tit-Bits.

Storks Dying Out?

The stork is dying out in Germany. In 20 years the number of occupied nests has decreased by approximately 70 per cent. This is regarded as a bad omen by the superstitious peasantry, who think themselves twice blessed if a stork builds on their roof. Indeed, in many villages the peasants go to the length of putting a cartwheel on their chimney, in order to entice this harbinger of good times. The reason German scientists advance for this decrease is curious. In the winter the stork goes to South Africa, where his chief food is the locust. In recent years the South African farmers have been waging a highly organized war on the locust. In this campaign arsenic plays a leading part, and it has been proved that whole colonies of storks have perished through eating arsenic-poisoned locusts.

Exhaust Steam

It was some years ago that Sir Charles Parsons first showed that by means of the steam-turbine exhaust steam from reciprocating engines could be used to produce power more economically than it had been produced before.

Later Professor Rateau of the School of Mines, in Paris, discovered a method of using exhaust steam from engines that run intermittently. According to a high authority, the practical result of the development of exhaust and mixed-pressure steam turbines has been that, on land alone, nearly 2,000,000 horse power of electrical energy is being generated by means of exhaust steam that has previously been wasted.

Facts About Waterspout

The weather bureau says the idea that a waterspout can lift water to great heights by vacuum while a perfect vacuum pump will lift it only 34 feet at sea level is a case of appearances being deceiving. There is no vacuum inside a waterspout—only a very partial vacuum, rarely sufficient to lift the water as much as two feet. The water of a waterspout is mostly rain from above. The lower portion of the spout contains a good deal of sea water as spray (not a continuous column of water) blown up by the wind.

Costly Precipitation

Three-year-old Jackie had the reputation for doing the unusual. One afternoon his mother, while dressing for tea, could find neither her pearls nor her son. Going out on the upstairs porch to call him, she found Jackie standing by the railing busily dropping her lost pearls one by one into the bushes below.

"Jackie!" screamed his mother, "what are you doing?"

As the last few beautiful pearls dropped from his chubby fingers he cried in glee: "Oh, mudder, look at the pitty waindwoops."

Actions Alone Count

It is not wholly your plan of living but how you carry that plan out. Intention may be all right but results count. In this world a man is estimated by what he is and what he accomplishes.—Grit.

Punishment Not Given for the Child's Good

That most children are punished not to make them better but because the parent is angry or has had his ego wounded is revealed by Winthrop D. Lane, writing in the Delineator Magazine.

"Parents have certain pictures of themselves," points out Mr. Lane, "certain conceptions of themselves, and they do not like to have these disturbed. Even a child, if he steps on an adult's ego, is likely to regret it. And then we have to admit that children are nuisances. Love them as we may, cherish them as tenderly as we wish, they annoy us tremendously. They make us climb the stairs at night to give them drinks; they disobey us; they endanger our property by striking matches. They break things—they lose things. They pile all the chairs in one corner of the room and call it a steamboat. They trail mud through the house; they leave marks on the walls. They break out in new misconduct every day. We cannot cope with all the varieties of their mischief.

"And so we punish them. We punish them because they make us angry, interfere with our plans and cause us worry. No parent likes to have his day knocked into a cocked hat."

Scientists Frown on Idea of Divining Rod

Letters are frequently received by the geological survey, Department of the Interior, asking for the names and prices of the best makes of instruments guaranteed to find diamonds, gold, silver and other metals, and especially buried treasure. The claims of venders of mineral rods and other devices said to be effective in locating precious metals and buried treasure are considered fraudulent by the geological survey. The dip needle or miner's compass has been used with some success in prospecting for iron and other magnetic ores, but the successful use of such an instrument requires considerable experience in surveying, together with the ability to make accurate mathematical observations and deductions. Various types of electrical prospecting devices, the seismograph and the torsion balance, have aroused considerable interest during the last few years. These devices, however, are most complicated and require the services of technical experts specially trained in their use. They would be of no service to one not versed in the principles of geology and physics.

Commercialism and Art

Those who deery the commercialism of America find it interesting to observe the economic condition of nations during their golden ages of art and literature. Even that dream jewel of romance and delicate architectural beauty, Venice, acquired most of its greatest art treasures with the wealth obtained as commercial mistress of the Adriatic, and at the very apex of its glory was nothing more than a seaport capital renowned for its energetic merchants and virile trade. Those who postulate that one cannot be a sincerely great artist and still make a living at the profession have no criterion upon which to base their statement.—Carlton Kendall in the North American Review.

Unfinished Production

After an entertainment in a North side church, the chairman of the committee came up to one of the class members and said, sympathetically:

"I am sorry we didn't get to call on you for your magic art, but we had to cut a lot of the numbers. I hope you don't feel put out about it."

The amateur magician hung his head. "I am put out—just \$5 worth."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I didn't get a chance to get back the \$5 bill I smuggled into a man's pocket, which I was going to mysteriously produce in one of my main tricks."—Youngstown Telegram.

Hail and Snow

Hail and snow are simply forms of water and there is nothing about them that is used in making explosives. The verses of the Bible frequently referred to in this connection do not indicate they are used for explosives: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" These lines, put into the mouth of the Deity, refer to man's ignorance and weakness against the natural forces of snow and hail.

The Bright Side

"Well, there's one nice thing about my wife," in the cross-roads store announced Gap Johnson of Rumpus Ridge.

"Spring it!" said the proprietor of the emporium. "What's the answer?" "She's so long and thin that if she fell into the well I don't reckon it would take more'n about three of the kids to pull her out with me a-bossing the job."—Kansas City Star.

When to Be Bold

Why not be bold if you really want to win? Be cautious, of course, in arriving at your decisions but bold in executing them.—American Magazine.

Good Enough Proof

Grace—Last night George said he'd kiss me or die in the attempt. Gwen—Did he kiss you? "Well, he was alive this morning."—Sray Stories.

Vividness of Writing Made Herodotus Great

The true greatness of Herodotus is evidenced by the fact that he has always been readable. This Greek died about 2,350 years ago, yet his history is much more fascinating than many dull and ponderous tomes penned by innumerable successors who have lived nearer the Modern age.

Many writers who have seemed great in their own generation have become almost unreadable. Herodotus began to write and to travel at an early age. These two interests apparently appealed to him more than anything else in life and, fortunately, he could gratify them. He traveled through all the lands where Greek was spoken, in Europe, Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean. He traveled through Persia, visiting lowlands and highlands. He saw Palestine, made a long visit in Egypt, and in Europe struck far into the forest lands of the barbarians. He talked with all sorts of people, inspected the ruins of the fallen civilizations, noticed the differences between nations. He was the ideal traveler, quick to note the odd things that distinguished one people from another, but more interested in the deeper and subtle differences that are less apparent. However, he was a greater writer than historian. Despite the solid merits of his history it lives because it is so beautifully and so vividly written.—Kansas City Times.

Got Instrument That Suited Whole Family

"An agent was at our house the other day trying to sell us a piano," said the fat plumber.

"Did you buy one?"

The thin carpenter naturally asked the question.

"No, because my daughter is the only one in the house who can play a piano."

"I see."

"And then he wanted me to buy a harp."

"I suppose you bought one."

"I did not. None of us can pick a harp."

"Did he try you on anything else?"

"Yes. Next he proposed a cornet, and when I didn't want that he suggested a ukulele."

"And you didn't take any of those?"

"No, but I told him I would come down to the store the next day and pick out something we could all play."

"And did you really do it?"

"I certainly did."

"What did you pick out?"

"A kazoo."—Youngstown Telegram.

Olives

Most olives eaten in America are green olives which have been pickled whole or with the pits removed. In the Mediterranean countries it is customary to eat the ripe fruit cured in salt. Olives in this manner constitute a staple part of the laborer's daily diet. It is very rarely that ripe olives are eaten in the United States. The Department of Agriculture has introduced a new variety called the Baroulet olive, especially adapted for pickling ripe. It is a native of north Africa and has been grown successfully in California. The original stock of a few trees has expanded until there are now orchards of about 100 acres total area on the Pacific coast.—Pathfinder Magazine.

First Whites in Hawaii

Early Hawaii legends indicate that the first white men visited Hawaii 400 years ago. Many historians and scientists maintain that no white men were there before Capt. James Cook arrived in 1778, but the Hawaiian legends tell of the wrecking of a strange vessel and landing of several white men in 1527. It is pointed out that no white people except the Spaniards were cruising in the Pacific at that early period, and some historians think it entirely possible that the strange vessel was one of three sent out by Cortez from Mexico in an attempt to reach California.

Earliest Public Libraries

It is impossible to determine which was the first library in the United States supported by public funds and wholly free to its users. The earliest recorded gift of books to a municipality is that of Rev. John Sharp, who in 1700 bequeathed his library to the city of New York for the benefit of the people. The town library of Petersburg, N. H., formed through the efforts of Rev. Abiel Abbot in 1833, appears to have been the first free library which has continued to the present day.

Large Mouth, Small Throat

The throat of the giant sperm whale is said to be large enough for the passage of an object about the size of a man's waist. The food consists largely of cuttlefish, but fishes not larger than the bonito and the albacore are found in its stomach. The sperm whale is the only large whale which feeds upon fish. The blue whale, the largest animal alive today, reaching a length in excess of 80 feet, with a mouth so large that ten to twelve men could stand therein, has a throat about 8 inches in diameter.

Rather the Contrary

Carried away by the beauty of the heroine on the screen, he murmured, unconsciously, "Isn't she lovely?" "Every time you see a pretty girl you forget you're married," snapped his better half. "You're wrong, my dear; nothing brings home the fact with so much force."

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