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**Gambling on a Monarch's Life.**

In order to understand the object of the rumors which are constantly being circulated regarding the health of King Edward it is necessary to explain that an enormous speculative business is done in England in insurance policies on his life. I have been informed that the insurance laws of this country do not admit of the issue of policies such as are being constantly taken out in England on King Edward's life by people who have no connection whatsoever with him and who merely insure his life for the benefit of the holder of the policy, as an investment, or, rather, as a speculation. Of course, when the king is reported to be ill the business in the policies taken out in the English and other European countries on his life becomes exceedingly brisk, and they are sold at big premiums by their holders, whereas if he is reported well

and as likely to live for a long number of years, the prices go down.

A similar trade was done during the life time of Queen Victoria in insurance policies on her life, and at the time of the ceremonies in connection with the celebration of her two jubilees every contractor who put up a stand in the London streets for the purpose of selling seats thereon to loyal citizens anxious to witness the passage of the magnificent pageants considered it necessary to insure the life of her majesty, at any rate to the amount of the cost of his timber and labor, so as to guard himself against loss in the event of her death before the jubilee celebration took place.

That is the true meaning and purpose of the constant reports which are being circulated in England regarding the health of the sovereign. He is perfectly aware of the extent to which his life is an object of speculation to people to whom his death would mean

the accession of wealth, through the payment of the policies which they hold upon his life, and it is because he resents this and does not wish to promote or assist in any way the speculative operations of these individuals yearning for his demise that he insists upon so much secrecy being observed by his entourage about the condition of his health.

It is not generally known that in Great Britain it is a criminal offense known as "misprison" to issue or circulate false reports concerning the health of the sovereign. It is, in fact, petty treason, entailing fine and imprisonment. But neither Edward VIII nor his mother, Queen Victoria, has ever cared to avail themselves of its provisions, and the last instance of any one being sent to jail for "misprison" was that of an unfortunate London alderman at the beginning of the nineteenth century, who had publicly expressed the opinion that the

king—poor George III—was cracked, which, indeed, he really was. King Edward contents himself with instantly dismissing from his service any of the household who discuss his health with outsiders or who circulate information concerning it. Were it not for the knowledge that it is a subject for financial speculation he would be entirely indifferent to what people said about it, and it is a mistake to ascribe to him undue sensitiveness about the matter.—Correspondence of Washington Post.

**Worth Its Weight in Gold.**

Common as iron appears to be, it is, in certain forms, a precious metal, and may be worth—not theoretically, but intrinsically, and weight for weight—far more than gold. One pound of crude iron, worth less than a halfpenny, will produce 7000 grains of spring steel. This may be made into watch springs, and it is said that ten of the finest kind of springs weigh only one grain. Therefore your halfpenny worth of iron can be converted into 10,000 springs, worth at the least 5 shillings each; total value £17,500, brought by labor out of two farthings' worth of iron. The metal is worth in this case nearly 300 times as much as gold. In the form of the needle in the mariner's compass iron is of untold value, for no other metal will take its place, and without it ocean navigation would never have been developed.

The peculiarity of iron as the only magnetic metal gives some support to the theory of certain geologists that the real mass of the earth and all of the bodies in the universe, is iron; that our annual supply of a paltry 50,000,000 tons is a small part of what has cropped up near the surface, and that the main source of supply lies some forty or fifty miles under our feet in a semi-molten mass of countless billions of tons; that the earth, in fact, is just a big white-hot cannon ball, shot from the sun some millions of years ago, with a gathering of rust and crust upon its surface. The high mass density of the earth also gives color to this theory.—Lecture by Mills Palmer at London Ironmongers.

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**GLACIAL AGE IN CENTRAL EUROPE**

In Central Europe most of the mountain groups had glaciers during the ice age; the glacial snow line, therefore, was depressed to an elevation of 3,000 feet and less. In the west it lay lower than in the east; the mountains of Wales produced a considerable glaciation in the same latitude in which the Ural mountains were not glaciated at all. The snow line of the glacial period descended toward the ocean, and ascended toward the center of the continent, as is the case with the present snow line. This points to the fact that during the great ice age Central Europe was in the neighborhood of the sea. In the Alps the glacial snow line was more elevated in the central parts than in the peripheral regions; it arched over the mountains. The same happens at present, and there is a marked parallelism between the actual and the glacial snow line, the latter lying from 3,600 to 3,900 feet below the former. In Southern Europe there are conspicuous irregularities in the elevations of the glacial snow line. On the west coasts of the three southern peninsulas it lies very low, in some places at an elevation of only 4,000 feet, while it rises very much toward the center of the peninsulas, where it is met with in elevations of above 6,000 feet.

This arrangement of the glacial snow line reveals to us some of the climatological circumstances of the glacial epoch. There is always a considerable depression of the snow line in mountainous regions which stretch across the direction of the prevailing winds. The very remarkable depression of the glacial snow line along the western flanks of the southern peninsulas of Europe therefore indicates prevailing westerly winds in the northern part of the Mediterranean sea during the great ice age, in the same way as the depression of the actual snow line on the coasts of Patagonia, New Zealand and Alaska depends on the westerly winds there. After all probably these westerly winds did not extend so far north as to reach the rim of the large ice cap which covered Northern Europe; this ice cap must have been accompanied by a barometric maximum, which caused easterly winds along the southern frontier of the ice. Thus we have to assume in the middle parts of Central Europe easterly winds, and during the ice age the arrangement of the winds in Central and Southern Europe must have been nearly the same as that found by the different Antarctic expeditions at the border region of the actual Antarctic ice cap. There are also some indications that the realm of the easterly winds was subject to seasonal changes.—From a paper read by Albrecht Penck before British Association.

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