

Strange But True

By F. H. MacArthur

Some years ago a Swiss farmer thought up a novel method of sowing grass seed on old pastures. First, he made a small revolving drum with a half dozen tiny holes punched into it. Into the drum went a quart of timothy and clover seed. Then he hung the little gadget on bossy's neck and let her do the actual seeding. It worked, too. The idea caught on, and now some Ontario farmers have adopted the novel plan with very gratifying results.

Before the beginning of written records, picture writing was in vogue in many parts of the globe. Picture writing is merely a system of conveying thoughts or facts through pictures. This kind of writing existed among the early Egyptians, Babylonians, Chinese and the American Indians, the latter being highly advanced in this art.

There is in Europe today a timetable which has pictures on it for the purpose of guiding tourists. Here's how it works: A small cup on the timetable indicates a place where refreshments may be had; the picture of a fish indicates to the traveler that he is in good fishing grounds. Various other signs indicate things of importance.

Maybe our local Travel Bureau would like to try out the plan. If it works out well in Europe it should do the same in Prince Edward Island. It's worth a try.

The word "cuneiform" was coined by Thomas Hyde, of England. Cuneiform writing replaced picture writing. Then followed alphabetic writing which quickly spread across the whole civilized world, and made it possible for man to share his thoughts with another thousands of miles away.

The social invitation is copied from the Algonquians. Before 1800 they were sending out "dinner invitations" in the form of specially cut blocks of wood of small size. All those who received the bits of wood knew they were invited to be present at the celebration and dinner.

Today written invitations to this or that function are so common that we scarcely give a thought to how they originated.

The following rare old invitation, written in 1786, is copied from William Horne's famous Table Book:

"Suspend for one day your cares and your labors,
And come to this wedding, kind friends and good neighbors,
Such sports there will be as have seldom been seen,
Such whistling and dancing, and dancing between,
And races for prizes, for frolic and fun
By horses and asses and dog will be run.

That you'll go home happy—as sure as a gun.
In a word, such a wedding can never fail to please
For the sports of Olympus were trifles to these."

This specimen of early written invitation sheds considerable light on the kind of wedding invitation that was popular in those days. We still have weddings, but not fancy racing dogs, whistling matches and so on at the modern marriage.

The calling card of today is just another hand down from primitive man who placed a bit of carved rock at the entrance to a cave. If it were taken in he knew he was welcome; if it remained where he'd placed it, he went off about his business, no doubt whispering under his breath, "Well that's that."

Many persons still refer to Friday as an unlucky day. It is no more unlucky than any other day of the week. Remember that it was on Friday, August 3rd, that Columbus set sail on his great voyage of discovery. They sighted land on Friday, Oct. 12th—The New World!

The curious notion that breaking a mirror will bring seven years of bad luck, is just a lot of bunk. So is the ringing of death bells in one's ears, and changing one's seat during a card game to insure better hands. Indeed, the world is still so cluttered up with superstitions that it would require a good sized book to record them.

The same goes for dreams, and Shakespeare wisely said, "Of what silly things dreams are made of." Yet thousands of people believe in dreams and purchase so-called books which pretend to explain authoritatively the meaning of various dreams. Remember what P. T. Barnum said about a sucker being born every minute. Barnum was right.

It is interesting to note the dying words of some of the world's most unforgettable characters. "I want for nothing but to die in the correct way," said Confucius.

"All my possessions for one moment of time!" was the last sentence spoken by Queen Elizabeth.

Dr. George Miller Beard, distinguished American medic and scientist: "I should like to record the thoughts of a dying man for the benefit of science, but it is impossible."

The last words of Theodore Roosevelt were, "Put out the light, please."

General Wolfe: "Now I can die in peace."

His great adversary Montcalm said: "Thank God I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

Wearied of life and wasted with fever Lord Byron turned his face to the wall and whispered, "Now I shall go to sleep."

The great Napoleon passed away on the island of St. Helena during a thunder storm. Suddenly he arose from his sick bed and shouted: "Mon Dieu! The French Nation! Head of the Army!"

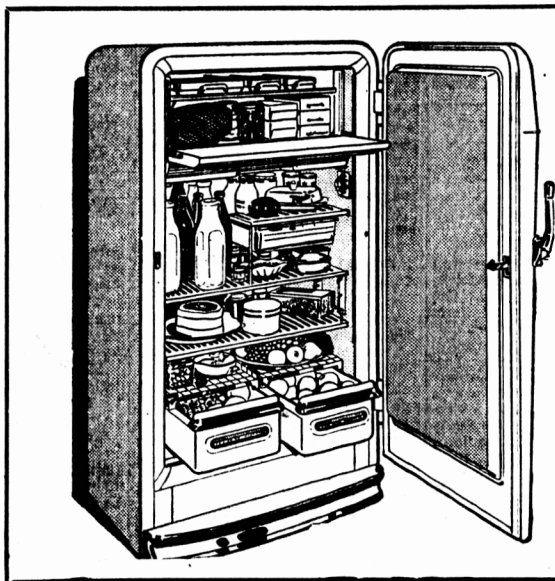
Estadofods, or festivals of music and poetry, have been held in Wales for more than 1,000 years.

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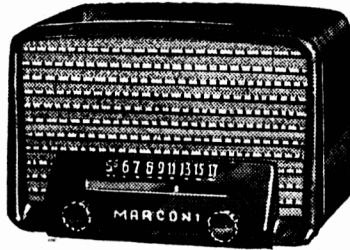
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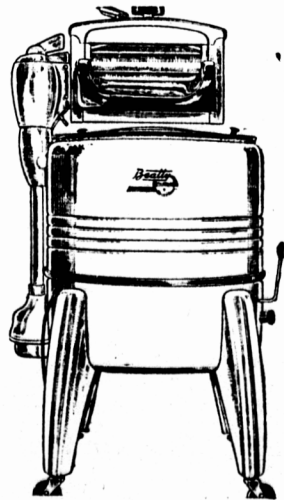
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