

BIRTHDAY IN 8 YEARS.

About 150 Babies Were Born in New York Feb. 29.

QUEER HISTORY OF THE CALENDAR.

Now It Happens That There Will Not Be a Leap Year Again for Eight Years.

One hundred and fifty babies (in round numbers) in this big city will not have a birthday for eight long years.

Now, it so happens that every four hundred years there comes a year that ought to be a leap year, but it isn't.

NOT A GOOD IRISHMAN.

The Appellate Court Renders a Decision in a Theatrical Suit That May Cost Denman Thompson \$5,000.

A decision has been rendered by the Appellate Court which may cost Actor Denman Thompson, of "Old Homestead" fame, the sum of \$5,000, and which is interesting both to lawyers and laymen on account of its unique character.

Eight years ago Wayne Ellis, a well-known playwright, wrote a play called "Rich and Poor," the hero of which was one Tom Nolan, an Irish character.

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time of the Council of Nice in the year 325 A. D., the 25th of March fell on the 21st, and when the reform of the calendar was made in 1582 it had retrograded to the 11th.

In order to keep the calendar right in the future, the arrangement was made which brings about the exceptional occurrence at the coming of the next leap year after 1896.

As the error of the Julian intercalation of one day every four years was calculated to amount to three days in 400 years, Gregory, by the advice of an astronomer in Naples, ordered the intercalation to be omitted in all the century years excepting those that are multiples of 400.

According to the Gregorian rules, intercalation, therefore, every year of which the number is divisible by four without a remainder is a leap year with twenty-nine days to February, excepting the century years, which are only leap years when divisible by four after omitting the two zeroes.

Thus, 1600 was a leap year, but 1700, 1800 and 1900 are not leap years. The year 2000 will be a leap year, but 2100 will not; so that it will be two centuries before there is a succession of eight years without a leap year. Hence the reason for 1896 being an exceptional leap year.

The Gregorian system was at once introduced into Spain, Portugal, part of Italy, France and the Catholic States of Germany. But the Protestant States of Germany, when the new style was adopted, Russia still holds to the Julian reckoning.

In Great Britain the new style was successfully opposed by popular prejudice. But the inconvenience of using different dates from those in use in the greater part of Europe, in matters of history and chronology, began to be felt; and in 1751 an act of Parliament was passed adopting the new style in all public and legal transactions.

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A COLONIAL MUSEUM.

Plans for the Famous Old Van Cortlandt Mansion.

FOR RELIGS OF THE REVOLUTION.

Historic Associations to Be Kept Up by the Society of Colonial Dames.

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BILL NYE AND HIS SON.

Drawn by Mr. Nye.



BILL NYE ON THANKSGIVING.

An Unpublished Manuscript by the Dead Humorist.

Personally most every one has something to be thankful for.

For instance, though my turkeys have been snatched away by the hand of death and certain other parties, whose names I have not yet been able to obtain, I am told by my physician that turkey is not good for me, and that I ought to eat gluten bread and drink branch water all this year in order to be well.

So I am thankful, moderately so at least.

As a nation we may be thankful that we are at peace with all other nations, and that there is an unmistakable and determined effort all over the country to re-arrange and purify the wicked and destructive methods peculiar to the conduct of municipal government.

Beginning with that mighty municipal abcess known as New York, the cry has been taken up by the press and people generally, with good results.

Again I notice with much pleasure the laudable ambition for better roads. Civilization can never be anything but a name where people live in a land of trails and trails, and go from place to place guided only by the sense of smell.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a hollow sham and delusion, where dumb brutes are urged by a higher order of brute through mire and sand over impassable grades. We have graded our schools, let us grade our roads.

Gradually, too, there appears a wider and more hopeful condition in the matter of religion, and some day there will come the universal religion, which will pay more attention to general goodness and less to the fine fences; a religion of good feeling, good health, good food, good air and comfortable clothes; a comfortable religion, with more general joy in it and less misguided gloom; a religion that devotes less time to rehearsals and more to spontaneous good; a religion that wastes fewer precious moments on scolding and reproaches and puts in more time reducing sorrow to a minimum; in short, a religion that is more useful and less ornamental.

Then the money that now goes into a score of struggling, empty, half-supported, ill-attended institutions, will be used to build one comfortable, commodious edifice, where multitudes will be cheered by beautiful music and taught, not scolded or scared or cajoled; where actual intellectual food may be had, instead of the bran and the juiceless, joyless shavings of argument fed to those who for centuries behind the green goggles of mistaken faith have chewed this durable cud of doctrine; a religion full of hope and humanity, with food that is more mental and less detrimental. God speed the day. It will be one full of thanksgiving, a thanksgiving that will last forever, and no Governor will be able to tell us when it comes.

Then every day will be Thanksgiving by-and-by.

BILL NYE.

MICROBES THAT TRAVEL.

It Has Been Found in a Curious Way That Disease Germs Are Now Transmitted on Postage Stamps.

And now the microbes will catch the philatelist "if he don't watch out." A Dr. Unna has discovered that the germs of many dread diseases are sent on their travels by postage stamps.

A patient came to the doctor recently suffering from a peculiar parasitical growth in the beard. This doctor, who seems to be a sort of medical Sherlock Holmes, made a minute and microscopic examination, and at once recognized the disease as being that which afflicts the natives of British Columbia.

The patient said that he had never been in British Columbia, but that he had friends in that country with whom he was in frequent communication by mail. Being a collector of postage stamps, he was in the habit of removing them and pasting them in his album.

The doctor at once gave his opinion that the germ on a postage stamp is an ideal carrier of microbes, and that any disease that it may retain from the application of the tongue in removing stamps, even when the moistening is done with a sponge, may be transferred. Collectors will do well to study up the prevalent diseases of foreign lands, and when the microbes from India, China or South America gets in its work they may be able to diagnose their own cases without being subjected to an examination under the cathode ray.

MACHINE FOR BURIALS.

An Invention to Prevent Accidents at Funerals.

INTERMENT MADE AUTOMATICALLY.

This Ingenious New Method Soon to Be in Operation in New York.

An ingenious mechanical contrivance for lowering coffins into their graves after the manner of the trap-doors of modern theatres is being experimented with daily in Cypress Hills Cemetery.

The device works automatically, and enables a man of very slight stature to bury a very heavy coffin with ease. It is meant to do away with the grewsome association of scenes of burial as far as possible. If this unique cemetery trap-door be generally introduced, there will be no more of the distressing accidents one reads about when the ropes used for lowering a body break or slip.

The apparatus consists of a wooden frame about six inches square, which fits exactly on the head of the grave. Inside this framework is an ingenious piece of mechanism with an arrangement of cogs and pulleys which are worked by hydraulic power. The machine is operated by means of a hydraulic cylinder, filled with chemically pure glycerine, a non-freezing compound, and requires no refilling for a number of years. All the active parts are within the frame, and are made either of steel or of bronze. This insures lightness and durability.

At a burial the framework is placed by the edge of the grave. The casket is placed on the framework, and the straps which run transversely across the framework. These straps will bear a weight of 2,000 pounds, so that no accident from breakage can possibly occur. At a given signal the operator places his foot on a treadle, as shown in the illustration, and the coffin is lowered automatically into the grave, without jar or stoppage.

The speed can be regulated at will, and it descends at the rate of twenty-five seconds, it may be regulated so as to take a minute or more. When the coffin is lowered to the level of the grave, the cords attached to the strap hooks release them, and the straps are worked back on the framework in their quarters. These are not intended to serve a criminal purpose, but the Secret Service gobbles them just the same. The law says that nothing is to be done with the trap used in a theatre for the introduction of the Ghost in Hamlet, or the pantomime. In fact, the inventor appears to have borrowed the idea from this source.

Be this as it may, however, undertakers are enthusiastic over the machine. It is proposed to make use of it soon in Greenwood and Woodlawn cemeteries. Orders have been received for a number of machines. The law says that nothing is to be done with the trap used in a theatre for the introduction of the Ghost in Hamlet, or the pantomime. In fact, the inventor appears to have borrowed the idea from this source.

The idea of the invention occurred to the inventor as the result of a deplorable accident which happened at the interment of a friend. The scene at the graveside made such a deep impression upon her sensitive temperament for the inventor is a woman that has never rested until she has formulated this machine.

The idea, of course, was to place upon the market a machine which, from its simplicity in construction, durability and cheapness, would be available to all practical men. The patentee has spent large sums of money in travelling over the United States and bringing her invention before superintendents of cemeteries, undertakers and others who are interested in this question.

SUITS AGAINST THE "L."

Over 1,200 Filed Against the Company in a Year, but Few Tried.

The entire time of one of the seventeen Justices of the Supreme Court is occupied in the trial of cases brought against the elevated railroad company. Last year over 1,200 suits against the company were filed in the Superior, Common Pleas and Supreme Courts. Of these 800 were on the Supreme Court calendar, 300 in the Superior Court and about 50 in the Court of Common Pleas. This year all of the suits against the company are brought in the Superior Court and will be tried in the elevated railroad company.

Thus far nothing has been said of the way in which the paper counterfeiters are destroyed. They are put into a big tank with hot water and acids and are cooked and stirred about for many hours, until all length they are reduced to the condition of pulp. The pulp is dried, pressed into thick sheets and sold for paper stock. The process is the same as that which is applied to the damaged paper money received by the Treasury. Under the great war a few days hence will see large quantities of "fash money" which term is used to describe the printed advertisements in limitation of the national currency, with which the country is at all times flooded.

The Government to suppress them. They are confiscated wherever the detectives of the Secret Service come across them. Calendar bearing likenesses of silver certificates and bank notes with representations of gold coins come under this head. Not long ago a large number of soda water checks resembling nickel pieces were seized in Chicago.

The great majority of false coins are made with plaster moulds. Such moulds are carried to the Navy Yard where the real material, but are not put into the furnace, they are merely knocked to pieces with hammers, which is an effective method of destroying them. What is cast into the furnace, including the machinery and tools, is melted and returned to the mint. There is a small amount of silver in it, inasmuch as bogus silver pieces are always plated with silver nowadays by the up-to-date counterfeiters.

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