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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1928

"XMAS" AGAIN.

SOME years ago, remarks an exchange, a determined effort was made to discourage the practice of using "Xmas" for "Christmas"; but apparently those excellent intentions met with little success. The "X" still appears with deplorable frequency in all forms of printed matter. At times the shortened form is convenient for the copy-writer, limited for space and anxious to make an effective display; but there are instances where the correct spelling could be used to equal advantage. Habits die hard, and it is not to be expected that people will immediately abandon a practice which is sanctioned by old-established custom. But there is absolutely no defence possible for the pronunciation of the word with an "X," which makes it meaningless. In the first place, as all should know, the letter is not an "X" at all, but stands for the Greek "chi," the initial symbol of the name of Christ. It is bad enough to find so many careless people employing the shortened form in conversation, but when radio announcers, who ought to know better, broadcast their ignorance to thousands of listeners-in, old and young, nightly, it is time to make a protest. With Christmas activities growing as the sacred festival approaches, it would be well if more attention were paid to this small, but important point, in the interests of accuracy and reverence.

TIME'S CHANGES.

AT a recent auction sale in Ontario a livery man who had been in the business forty-three years, sold out his equipment. For three Victoria carriages, which cost on an average $1,500, he received $2.50 each. A fashionable winter cutter brought 60 cents, while one farmer paid one dollar for a closed cab, and chuckling over the bargain, he said: "This will make a real chicken coop." The livery man lamented that he had lost thousands of dollars over the sale of 100 vehicles, harness and robes, but it could not be helped. The equipment had to be sold; there was no more call for it.

What was true in this case is true of practically every country in the world. The horse-drawn carriage has become too slow for the modern pace. Even the fashionable cutter no longer attracts as it used to. In countries like our own where the use of sleighs is necessary for a few months in winter, the comparison between the sleigh and the automobile is so striking as to take all the attractiveness out of the former. And, with the passing of the carriage and the fashionable cutter, the driving horse, once the pride of its owner, is going also. This Province was at one time proud of and famous for its driving horses. There are few of them left, and in their place we have the heavy cart horse and worker, which may also be doomed to extinction before the rush of labor-saving machinery and the speeding up of traffic. The horse maintained the pace gallantly for some thousands of years. He has been obliged to give in, to leave the road for a faster mode of travel and the fields for more powerful engines.

Man, who has set this ever-increasing pace, may himself become a victim to the machinery which he has devised. The passion for speed, with its consequences, recalls the story of the Frankenstein monster, created by a scientific student from materials gathered in graveyards and the dissecting room and given a kind of life. Rendered frantic by its unsatisfied human cravings, the creature committed atrocious crimes and inflicted the most dreadful retribution upon its maker. The danger, however, remote, still exists that man may become a victim of his own inventions.

THE HONEY BEE.

BEES were at one time much more in evidence in this Province than they are at present, and considerable quantities of native honey were generally available. We now import practically all the honey that is used.

The great benefit of keeping bees is not only for the production of honey, but for increasing the productivity of fruit by fertilizing the fruit blossoms in their flitting from flower to flower in search of honey. One of the present difficulties in the way of successful bee keeping is the necessity of poison-spraying the apple trees. The bees come in contact with this poison and are killed. Much of the loss in the bee-keeping business has been from this source. No doubt this difficulty can be overcome in some way. There must be a time in the season when spraying can be done without danger to the bees—possibly before the blossoms appear; but this is a matter for expert apiarists to consider and to find a solution for.

Honey has been found to be an excellent specific in the case of diabetes, and it is now highly recommended in that connection. But a still more important fact connected with bees is now engaging the attention of scientists. It is known to everyone that the queen bee is produced from the same kind of egg that produces the worker bee. By special feeding which the bees know how to administer, the queen becomes a queen, larger, more regal, and lives from three or four years, while her sisters live only a year or so. This bee food is now being analyzed and investigated by Dr. Banting and other eminent scientists in the hope that the peculiar properties of the food may be applied to human life. What may come of this investigation remains to be seen. In the meantime the value of bees as an aid to fruit production cannot be over-estimated, and it is hoped that in the near future we may be able to spray our apple trees without endangering the lives of insects so industrious and useful to mankind.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The big question of the hour is where we can hide that rocking horse until Christmas morning.

An umbrella with teeth that grip the owner's sleeve has been invented. But will it snap at anybody who tries to steal it in a restaurant?

December nuts are falling;
The cuckoo, too, is calling;
The Poet, in his glory, struts
At ease amongst the other nuts.

It is estimated the population of the United States will reach 175,000,000 by 1975. By that time, it is suggested, two-thirds of it will be of Canadian descent.

Ottawa declares that there are two million turkeys for ten million Canadians—which works out at about one leg per boy per year. What is needed is a cross between a turkey and a centipede.

"One person is struck by an automobile in this country every forty-two seconds," says an informative American contemporary. To which The New York Evening Post remarks: "He must be in pretty bad shape by this time, whoever he is."

Of the 11,663 immigrants who entered Canada from all sources last September, only 4434 were British. Three thousand Canadians came back to us for repatriation from the United States in September; but the average monthly loss is at least 6000. Any way we look at them, these returns do not make inspiring reading for Canadians who love their country.

Notes by the Way

TALKING pictures at the movies are not a new thing. Twenty-five years ago experts in Britain, Germany and in the United States, where moving pictures were first shown, have been working and experimenting to add hearing to sight in what is now designated as "the silent drama." From the first crude attempts to elaborate this idea, costly experiments have been continued with such success that it is now said "all the world is talking of the talkies." And the result promises to be revolutionary.

American inventors led the way, and scored a large measure of success which stimulated inventors in other lands to renewed efforts. In different countries the talking pictures bear different names, such as the Movietone, the Vitaphone, the Phonofilm, the Phototone, and so on. The Western Electric group have enlisted the co-operation of the "big seven" of American movie kings and have also captured the main picture theatres of London. In Britain three houses were ready in November and 20 more promised to be in operation before the end of the year. The "talkie" has been introduced in 50 provincial theatres in England and there will be 20 more before January. In the meantime, 80 theatres per month have been transformed in a month in the United States and large numbers in France and Germany.

It is noted that the talking film is an amazing instrument of political propaganda. A record of Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Lloyd George on the gramaphone is comparatively lifeless. But when you both hear and see the statesmen on the Movietone, Mr. Baldwin with his pipe and the Welsh Wizard's silvery locks blowing in the breeze, they seem to live among us. Every political organization is bound to use the talking film extensively.

A famous English dramatist, we are told, recently stated in the London Daily Mail that the talking film is the greatest revolution that the theatrical world has ever known. The Hollywood beauty actors and actresses, he says, will soon be as dead as the third and fourth-rate touring theatrical companies. Hollywood realizes this and is in a panic. Really great actors will have their audiences enlarged beyond all former conception and extending over many lands, notably wherever the English language is known.

One of the biggest London managers who has no prejudice against things American, is quoted as saying: "I have a stock of American talking pictures and cannot use one of them. The harshness and accent of the young American woman, and still more of the American child, make them impossible." The reason is plain. Women players in moving pictures must—with very rare exceptions—be youthful. Age can conceal itself on the legitimate stage, but the cinema camera cruelly tears away the artifices by which age hides its years. For the talkies the performers must also have sweet and attractive voices.

The cost of installing a talking picture plant, varies from £300 to ten times that sum, we are told. The machine at the lower cost is of German invention, improved by English experts, and is known as the British Phototone. The talking picture theatres appear to be immensely popular wherever they have been introduced.

Radium, now in great demand is very scarce and very dear. A gramme—equal to about the weight of three asperin tablets, writes Dr. Saleeby, would cost £12,000. The present supply comes almost entirely from Belgian Congo. It has been reported recently that large quantities of radium-yielding rock have been found in Australia and Cornwall is said to have similar deposits. Austrian sources, formerly productive in a small way, have run out. Meantime all the world is being searched for radium and the world-wide call of the medical profession is "We must have radium."

Thirty-five below zero at Edmonton in the West, will be a disappointment to the mild winter prophets out there, and is rather unusual even there, so early in December. The Maritimes, as usual, have had but little cold weather as yet, but it will come in due time.

Life imprisonment was the sentence passed upon a man in Michigan a few days ago because he possessed a pint of gin. The Judge who sentenced him could not do otherwise as the law stands. The offence was clearly established by evidence. If prohibition fails to prohibit in Michigan, as many people claim, it is evidently not for want of extreme legal penalties. There are many convicts who would prefer a sentence to death rather than imprisonment for life.

It is a sad and anxious journey that is bringing the Prince of Wales back from Africa to Buckingham Palace. He cannot possibly arrive until next week.

On the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Le Cateau, France, from the Germans by the British Army, ex-menbers of the divison that relieved the place recently presented a watering trough to the town.

That Body of Yours

By James W. Barton, M.D.

THE COLD BATH

Perhaps you tried out the morning cold bath at some period in your life and you gave it up for some reason.

With many individuals the idea of cold water first thing in the morning is not pleasant.

Others like the sensation that follows a cold bath and a rub down, and they go at their breakfast with zest.

Others seem to get a nice reaction after the bath and feel good until about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, and then get a sagged, droopy feeling.

There are very few who can start in and take cold baths and feel real good all day afterwards. Most of them will get the draggy feeling.

Why?

First, the blood pressure and temperature are low early in the morning, and the body does not seem to like losing any more animal heat at this time, such as is caused by a cold bath.

Then there is the shock to the system which follows a cold bath.

This shock is too much for the majority of folks.

Now does this mean that the cold bath or cold shower should not be taken in the morning?

No, because a short cold bath of one minute, with temperature from 50 degrees to 80 degrees F., can really become of real help in stimulating the circulation, and other processes of the body.

A simple method used by "beginners" is to put warm water in the bath tub sufficient to reach just above the ankles. Then a cold shower is taken and the warm water about the ankles prevents the loss of too much animal heat, and also lessens the shock.

However after a time this warm water can be dispensed with, and the cold shower, one minute, may be taken. The "shock" is really beneficial.

Further, a short cold bath during the day when the temperature and blood pressure are higher, may prove very helpful in the same individual who got a poor or harmful reaction in the early morning.

Daily Selections for Guardian Readers

December 5, 1928

THE MAN OF SORROWS—Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.—Isa. 53:4.

PRAYER—Lord God forgive our foolish ways for His sake.

THE MOTHER-POET

My mother was a poet,
And though she left no song
To ripple down the centuries
And cheer the world along.

Her soul was full of music;
Her thought was set to rhyme
Of little feet that kept her heart
A-singing all the time.

Her life was one long measure
Of kind, unselfish deeds
(So common in the doing
One scarcely knows or heeds.)

She gave herself so freely—
Thought had she for us all,
And time to note each flower
And the first blue-bird's call.

A singer who sings truly
Must often sing in pain,
Yet hope rose through her sorrow
As rainbows through the rain.

O what a wondrous poem
Is mother-duty done!
My mother was a poet—
I'm sure that yours was one.

—Mary Poynter.

Household Scrapbook

By Roberta Lee

Scorching Food

When food starts to burn, place the pan immediately in another pan containing cold water. This will remove all the scorched taste.

Ham

In cooking ham or corned beef, be sure to put them on to boil in cold water instead of hot.

Bruises

To prevent the discolorations caused by bruises, apply hot cloths, one right after another.

The Ettrick Shepherd

(Montreal Gazette)

Amongst the minor poets of Scotland must be numbered James Hogg, better known perhaps as the "Ettrick Shepherd." During the sixty-five years of his eventful life, he was engaged in a dour struggle with poverty such as forms one of the most stirring stories of human pluck ever known, and serves to point the moral about poets being born, not made. He was born on the same date as Robert Burns, albeit the famous Ayrshire ploughman was eleven years the senior of the shepherd whose musing amid the lonesome, wild scenery of the Selkirk hills gave to the world the poems and ballads of a man described as the most creative and imaginative soul amongst all uneducated poets. A graphic though highly burnished impicturization of the Ettrick Shepherd appears in the essays of Christopher North, and another fine sketch in the memoirs of Robert Chambers, whilst anyone who cares to turn over the pages of Blackwood's Magazine in its earlier issues, will find plenty of material throwing much light upon the sort of genius which, in brooding silence and far away from the centres of light and leading, nurtured the faculty of tale-telling and of poetic expression, producing some strains which have in them, the breath of the forest and the fresh glow of the heather, some stanzas which the world will not willingly let die. They illustrate the amazing vitality of Scotch folklore, and the wondrous strength of Scotch song.

The Ettrick Shepherd came of a long line of ancestors who for centuries had followed this humble vocation. His father was a bankrupt by the time the lad was six years of age. His mother belonged to the Laidlaws and was a woman of remarkable ability, a self-taught genius of enthusiastic and imaginative mind, working upon a small number of simple ideas with which the mind of her Shepherd son were saturated and largely to her careful training and home tuition are due the ballads which, scribbled by "Jamie" in remote and solitary glens afterwards brought him fame, though little indeed of this world's goods. The best competence James Hogg ever knew came at the fag end of life when Duke Charles of Buccleuch made him a present of Altrive farm in the wilds of Yarrow. But ere he arrived that far in worldly comfort, the Ettrick Shepherd had weathered through many long days of arduous toil and a vigorous meditation which neither misfortune nor neglect could quench and which found him fluttering in rags and with plaidie and stick, a pastoral minstrel amid the Selkirk crags which undoubtedly helped to foster and inspire his genius. James Hogg had little or no schooling beyond hearthstone lessons. He was sent to earn his own living at seven years of age. His first job was tending a few cows. Strangely enough, he refers to his appointment as a shepherd as an elevation in rank. The wages he received were food and lodging and a pair of good shoes. Besides this, he managed to save five shillings by the time he was fourteen. This juvenile fortune was spent in buying a violin. He loved the fiddle, he tells us, and filled his leisure hours, such as they were in making "sangs" for the lads and lassies who, discerningly enough, began to hail him gleefully as "Jamie the poeter." He stiched a few sheets of paper together and for ink-horn borrowed a small phial which he stuck in his vest pocket, the cork "fastened by a bit of twine." With such implements in charge, who should meet him on the hill but half daftie John Scott who told him about Robert Burns and recited to him "Tam o'Shanter." The lines stuck in his memory. "I resolved to be a poet and follow in the steps of Burns," says the Ettrick Shepherd in his memoirs.

The comparison is not amiss. There are some ballads in his poetic production that vividly recall the style of Robert Burns. Such, for example, are "The Skylark" and "When the Kye Comes Hame," and "When Maggie Gangs Awa'"; sundry ballads of which Professor Wilson justly remarks, some are splendid, most of them vigorous, and the worst of them are far better than the best that ever was written by any bard in danger of being a blockhead. But between the Ayrshire and the Selkirk Scottish poets here brought into comparison, there is a marked difference, and the difference is this. The Ettrick Shepherd was thoroughly at home only in his native atmosphere when chanting the green beauty of the pastoral hills and peopling these heights with trooping visions of fairyland. He lived in the realms of fancy as may easily be seen in his festive masterpiece, "The Queen's Wake." And, granted that many of his shepherd songs "start up from the dew-sprinkled soil of a poet's soul," it still remains true that the Ettrick Shepherd was absorbed deep in a wavy world of wonder.

The Land We Love

By Frank Yeigh

The Laurentian Plateau?

Q. What is the Laurentian Plateau?

A. The great region thus named, composed of very ancient crystalline rocks, has an area of over 2,000,000 square miles, or more than one-half that of the entire Dominion. In a horse-shoe-like form, open to the north, it surrounds three sides of the comparatively shallow sea known as Hudson Bay. Its southern part is divided between Quebec and Ontario, its eastern side expanding into the Labrador peninsula, while the western runs, to the Arctic Sea, west of the great bay. In geographical extent it is thus very important. This area constitutes a gathering ground for many large and almost innumerable small rivers and streams, which, in the sources of power they offer in their descent to the lower adjacent levels are likely to prove, in the near future, of greater and more permanent value to the industries of the country than an extensive coal field.

Lashing the Laureate

(The Ottawa Journal)

The popular conception of a Poet Laureate is that of a bard who, in return for the dignity and pension conferred upon him by the Crown, to say nothing of the mythical hogshead of "canary" supposed to form part of his perquisite, is required to exercise his muse and break into appropriate verse every time an event of court or national significance happens. Tradition, it is generally believed, imposes upon him the necessity of celebrating a birth in the Royal family with an ode, of mourning the death of a prince with a dirge, of proclaiming a war victory with a song of triumph, and even of expressing the festive spirit of each succeeding New Year in a ballad.

It is a conception of the wearer of the bays and his functions which necessarily lays him open to indiscriminate, and often foolish, criticism. If he sings as the occasion, and not as the spirit, moves him, he is liable to be charged with writing to order, or with failure to maintain the high standard of expression expected of the nation's official poet. On the other hand, if he does not meet the popular demand for periodical effusions on State events, or for annual masterpieces with a national note, he is branded as a barren rascal, as uninspired as he is inarticulate.

Alternatively, that has been the fate of almost every Poet Laureate since the office was created. And when to the criticism meted out by an exacting public is added the jealous cavilling of rival bards, conscious of a superiority that is not usually visible to others, and the pert comment of literary oracles who take themselves too seriously it can hardly be said that the position traditionally associated with the duties of a court poet is an enviable one. Throughout the eighteenth century there was no more popular form of literary exercise than that of taking what was termed "a lick at the Laureate;" and one has only to recall the jeer of Swinburne about a "a linnet chirping on the wrists of kings" to realize that the fashion did not die with the Dennises, the Popes and the Fieldings of that earlier age.

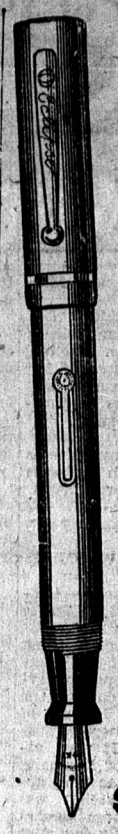
Dr. Robert Bridges, the present Laureate, has not escaped the fate of his predecessors. From the date of his appointment, fifteen years ago he has been subjected to a continuous barrage of criticism and raillery. Some of it has been directed against his qualities as a poet; most of it has been aimed at his supposed unproductiveness. The witlings of the "stunt press" have frequently made merry over his silence. Punch has more than once poured its satire upon him as a type of "the idle singer of an empty day;" and his unresponsiveness to the public call for periodical odes has even been the subject of questioning in Parliament.

But it has been reserved for Mr. James Douglas, a literary critic of pretensions and some repute, who airs his views on literature in the columns of a popular London newspaper, to launch an attack upon the venerable and venerated Poet Laureate that is as vulgar as it is vicious. Under the heading: "King Canary Still Refuses to Twitter," this Cockney connoisseur of letters, who has as little respect for age, as he has for good taste, commences his onslaught upon Dr. Bridges, now in his 84th year, with the callous statement that "Longevity may be a private blessing, but it is sometimes a public curse."

Having characterized the Laureate as "a barnacle, whose tenacity is equalled only by his taciturnity," and luridly denounced him for his reticence, he inconsistently proceeds to suggest that the poet's silence had been no great loss to letters after all. For in the opinion of Mr. Douglas, Dr. Bridges is "a pendant and a prosodist, rather than a poet, an arid theorist whose theories have produced dull and dreary doggerel." A column of equally vituperative comment follows, rounded off by the assertion that "we have so many poets, who are writing pure poetry, that we could find a new Laureate every year for ten years, without exhausting the supply, if only Dr. Bridges could be coaxed, or cajoled, into laying down his withered laurels, and abandoning his dessicated bays."

The attack will not hurt the aged Laureate, who has too fine a sense of dignity to be disturbed by what someone once termed "the barking of the curs of criticism." On the contrary, it has had one good effect, in that it has drawn from a critic much more eminent and authoritative than Mr. Douglas an appreciation of Dr. Bridges' qualities as a poet that, not only completely refutes the charges made by the Fleet Street pundit, but should serve to correct the impressions all too commonly entertained concerning the present wearer of the laurel. Far from being a mediocrity, or an inarticulate idler, Mr. J. C. Squires claims for Dr. Bridges that he is recognized by almost all his fellow poets "as being the greatest English poet alive, whether judged by the depth and variety of his 'content,' or by the consummate skill of his artistry."

As to his silence, so often made a subject of reproach, the editor of the London Mercury ventures the assertion that "since English literature began, no old man has been so productive, or so admirably productive, as the present Poet Laureate." It is a tribute which those who are familiar with Dr. Bridge's unostentatious contributions to literature will heartily endorse.



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Daily Lessons in English

WORDS OFTEN MISUSED: Do not say, "They have a couple of children." Say, "two children."

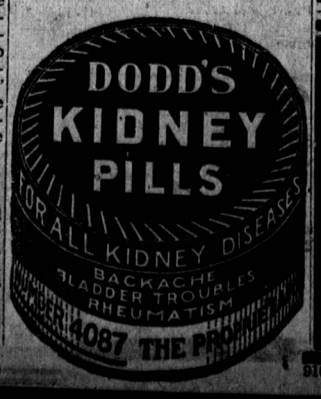
OFTEN MISPRONOUNCED: alma mater; first a as in "ae," second a as in "ask", third a as in "may," accents after the l and the third a.

OFTEN MISSPELLED: lyric.

SYNONYMS: roam, ramble, rove, range, prowl.

WORD STUDY: "Use a word three times and it is yours." Let us increase our vocabulary by mastering one word each day. Today's word: IMPERIOUS; imperative; urgent; compelling. "The situation is imperious in its demands."

Fitted with a proscenium, an orchestra pit and a pulpit, a London chapel has been remodeled so that it may be used for motion picture performances during the week and special "cinema services" on Sundays.



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