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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND HIS KITE.

One day; seeing a thunder storm approaching, he went, accompanied by his son, to a shed where, having raised a kite, he fastened a key to the lower extremity of the hempen cord, insulating it by attaching it to a beam with a piece of silk. Immediately after he observed some loose threads of the string rise and stand erect, and, on presenting his knuckle to the key, to his great delight he drew from it the well known spark. His emotion was so great at the completion of this discovery, which made his name immorfor his discovery with his life.

Your Toys; Where They Come From. Have you ever thought about it; your toys, I mean, where they come from and who makes them? Of late years there has sprung up quite a trade in our own country with manufacturers of toys, especially tin and wooden ones; but the bulk of toys are of foreign manufacture.

The principal toy countries are France, Bavaria, Thuringia and Bohemia; but toys are also made for exportation in Sweden, Norway, Belgium and Holland. The French toy is decidedly the best, both in artistic design and workmanship; but it is also very much the most expensive, and the trade scarcely increases from year to year, whilst and balls, our nests of turned boxes, etc. Belgium follows in this, and in nearly all other articles of manufacture, closely upon the plans and models of France; and Holland, as might be expected, makes lead soldiers.

England also makes toys, chiefly paper dolls, which are manufactured by one house in Birmingham to the extent of 200,000 annually; but this work of doll making in England is confined to the larger towns-nothing of this kind is done by the peasantry.

In Germany many towns, and more especially the quaint old towns of Nuremberg and Leipsic, are surrounded by a great community of peasant toymakers. These people, whose picturesque hamlets nestle in the depths of the Thuringia forest, or dot the open country, are engaged during the entire winter in this employment.

The process of toy making is varied, but always simple. In some cases certain members of the family develop a talent for making certain parts of a particular toy, and the different pieces composing it are made by different hands, and put together by still another worker. Sometimes the toy is entirely made by one person, but this seldom occurs where a family works together.

Buttonless Bob.

Off from the neck of the shirt he wore, From his little plaid trousers half a score (His jacket had lost them all before), Tumbling Bob!

Buttons went flying and jacket was rent As down the hill on his 'cycle he went; That is the way father's money is spent, Careless Bob!



BOB ON HIS 'CYCLE, But when at night in his trundle bed, The moonlight beams on his curly head, Mother is busy with needle and thread, Lucky Bob!

Loving fingers sew firm and fast; The dear boy's mending is done at last, And buttonless troubles once more are past--Little Men and Women.

Crow Talk.

In America, "to eat crow" is the same as to eat humble pie-i. e., to have to retract or to be put to shame. "To talk crow" is the opposite of "to talk turkey," and means to talk to another's disadvantage. It comes from a story of a white man who went to hunt with an Indian on condition that the game should be divided between them. There was a brace of wild turkeys and a brace of crows, and the white man counted, "There's a crow for you and a turkey for me, and another crow for you and"- To which the Indian remonstrated, "You talk all turkey for you and all crow for me!"

THE CURIOSITY SHOP.

Half Century.

The comparative tables of the population and area of the various countries of the world. taking them with their dependencies, which appear in the new edition of The Statesman's year book, have been compiled from Professor Levasseur's statistics furnished to the International Statistical institute, and may be described as presenting old facts in a new and striking light. In point of area the British empire stands at the head of the list, the number of thousands of square miles being 9,339, Russia following closely with 8,644. Though the Chinese empire is but a little less than one-half as extensive as its neighbor, in population China, with her 404,000,000, tops all the countries of the earth. The British empire comes next, with 307,000,000, and Russia with only 104,000,000; while France has but 71,000,000, the United States 58,000,000 and the German empire 48,000,000. The comparative rates of increase of population of the European states since 1800 also yield some instructive results. Thus, while the United Kingdom has since that period risen from 16,250,000 to 37,000,000, Russia in Europe from 35,000,000 to 88,000,000, and the German empire from 27,000,000 to 47,000,-000 (including Alsace and Lorraine), France has only advanced from 33,000,000 to 38,250,-000. Professor Levasseur estimates that between 1710 and 1874 the entire population of the world about doubled-the figures being 682,000,000 at the former date, reaching 1,391,-000 at the latter period.

The Phonograph Foreshadowed.

Mr. D. Walkinshaw writes from Bristol as follows: "One of Plato's disciples, anticipating Munchausen, compared his master's thoughts to words frozen in the air as soon as uttered, to be heard long after when thawed out by a warmer season, as voices falling out of the air upon astonished travelers. In Hood's Comic Annual for 1839 we find the following adumbration of the phonograph: 'In this century of inventions, when a self acting drawing paper has been discovered for copying visible objects, who knows but that a future Niepce, or Daguerre, or Herschel, or Fox-Talbot, may find out some sort of Boswellish writing paper to repeat whatever it hears?' Similarly, about a quarter of a century before the invention of tal, that he felt he could almost have paid the telephone and the phonograph, the editors of The Artisan reported the meetings of their 'club' by means of an imaginary 'reporting box,' which was always placed upon the table, and faithfully reproduced all that was said by the distinguished members."

The Happiest Country in Europe.

According to Dr. Alice Vickery the first place belongs to France, chiefly because French families do not exceed manageable dimensions. She says: "In the first place, while the surplus of women in the United Kingdom and in Germany amounts to nearly three-quarters of a million and one million respectively, France, in 1881, had a surplus of only 92,000 women, and, as a consequence, marriages are more prevalent in proportion to population in France than elsewhere; and, the German toy trade advances in leaps and | curiously enough—contrary to the general jumps, and the article becomes cheaper and opinion in this country-France has the cheaper. Sweden and Norway make chiefly smallest proportion of illegitimate births. things of wood; from them we get our cups | Thus, from 1825 to 1867 the percentage of all illegitimate births was 7.2 in France; 8.2 in Prussia; 10 in Sweden; 11 in Austria, and 22 in Bavaria. France has the lowest birth rate of all European countries-viz., 23.8.

Signor Blitz.

The first of the great prestidigitateurs in America was Signor Blitz, Antonio Blitz, prestidigitateur and ventriloquist, died in Philadelphia, Jan. 28, 1877. He left two daughters-Jennie, who married James Van Zandt, a cousin of ex-Governor Van Zandt, of Rhode Island, and Ada, who married a New York man-also a son, Arthur, who made no headway in the world and died. The old ventriloquist, Blitz, had two or three assistants who attended him in his performances, and some of them performed in his name in various parts of the country after his death. The old magician was an English Jew and his wife was Irish. Their first daughter, Jennie, referred to, is the mother of Marie Van Zandt, the opera singer, now in Europe.

Chinese Cities.

There are no official records of the population of Chinese cities, and guesses at the number of their inhabitants must depend on the guesser. Canton is "estimated" to have 1,600,000 inhabitants. Twenty years ago it had 1,250,000. Pekin, in 1870, had an "estimated" population of 1,500,000; now it has one (also estimated) of 1,000,000. The probability is that the largest Chinese city hasn't more than two-thirds of its "estimated" population. The city of London, which is "London proper," has a population, according to the census of 1881, of 50,652. The great aggregation of houses and conglomeration of people which we call London contains, included in the metropolitan and the city police districts, a population of 4,766,661.

Plenty of Room. It is very difficult to estimate the number of individuals in a crowd with any approach to accuracy. Thousands of people can stand in a very small space. From the following statistics it will be seen that there is plenty of room on the earth for all the people who inhabit it, and that there is no fear of our planet becoming over populated at present. The entire population of the world (now estimated at 1,400,000,000) could stand on the space occupied by New York, Brooklyn and Jersey City. The state of New York would in this way accommodate 500 times the present population of the world. The entire population of the world, placed side by side, and allowing two feet to each person, would encircle the earth twenty times.

Origin of County Courts.

The extent of settlement had become so great in Virginia in 1622 that it was inconvenient to bring all legal causes to the capital at Jamestown, and inferior courts were appointed in convenient places to relieve the governor and council (who constituted the superior judiciary) of a heavy burden of business, and to render business more accessible and less expensive. With these began the establishment of county courts in America.

Plurality and Majority. Plurality means the difference between the highest number and the next highest, where several numbers appear in competition. A majority is the difference between the highest number and all the others combined.

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