

THOUSANDS OF WILLS

The Work of the Public Trustee

One of the most helpful ways in which the State touches the private lives of individuals is through the Public Trustee Office.

Anybody can appoint the State a trustee under a will or a settlement with full knowledge that his wishes will be carried out to the letter.

Last year the Public Trustee dealt with income and capital to the value of £60,000,000, and only one claim was made against him. This concerned an income of £26 paid to the wrong member of a family.

About 30,000 wills and trusts have been administered since the office came into existence in 1908, and at the present time 18,500 are being dealt with.

Property worth £50,000,000 and funds worth £215,000,000 are now in the control of the Public Trustee, who pays out to beneficiaries about ten millions a year.

In the administration of its trust many are the problems the office is called on to solve, the State acting like a benevolent uncle in settling family difficulties.

THE TWO LANCELOTS

We are growing steadily more aware of the value of county records.

Nottingham is sorting hers.

Once these precious documents lay helter-skelter in a room under the Shire Hall, and two cells are still full of them; but now they are being classified and carried to new muniment rooms in the offices of the County Council.

One of the most interesting documents that has yet turned up is a sixteenth-century book made for the use of one of the officers of Sherwood Forest in Tudor times. This old book tells us that one of the verderers was Launcelot Roulston; and Sir Lancelot Rolleston is a member of the County Council today!

For centuries the Rollestons have served Nottingham in one way or another. A Rip Van Winkle who fell asleep in the Nottingham of Elizabeth's day and woke up in ours would not find everything changed.

ON THE KING'S YACHT

Although Commander Gavin's book containing the history of all the royal yachts from the time of Charles the Second includes most of the interesting details about the King's yacht Victoria and Albert, one little-known fact about it has been omitted.

The Victoria and Albert is a three-masted vessel of 4700 tons, and at the base of each mast three coins are buried.

The coin layers were Queen Victoria, King Edward, and King George. The Queen and King Edward deposited a sovereign, a five-shilling piece, and a penny, but for some reason King George made his penny a half-crown.

The royal yacht carries national relics of personal interest to the King, among them the flag which Scott flew on his last Antarctic expedition.

FUNNY

The parish council of a small German town had to draw up a regulation making it incumbent on owners of dogs to put them on a lead when out walking. The first draft read as follows:

He who owns a dog and is seen running about the streets without a lead will be shot.

"That can't be right," said a member of the council; "it sounds as if the owner was to be shot."

So the regulation was redrafted, and now runs thus:

He who owns a dog and is seen running about the streets without a lead will be shot—the dog.

THE WORLD'S GOLD A New Record

The first estimate of the world's production of gold last year has appeared, and the output is stated at 23,500,000 ounces, 700,000 more than in 1931.

There has been a steady increase in production in recent years. In 1923 the output was less than 18 million ounces, and in 1929 just under 20 millions.

We can easily understand the stimulation of gold output when we remember that the great fall in prices has made gold more valuable because exchangeable for more goods.

The monopolisation of most of the world's gold by the United States and France has, of course, had much to do with the fall in prices which has upset the world and brought millions to a state of destitution.

GOOD NEWS OF BOW BELLS

It is good news that Bow bells, silent for nearly six years, are soon to be heard again; and we believe they will ring in more prosperous days for London.

When will you pay me? say the bells of Old Bailey,
When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch.
When will that be? say the bells of Stepney;
I do not know, say the great bell of Bow.

Peter Puck declares that the Bow bells know more than we think about the good time that is coming when, even if Londoners do not grow rich, there will be more employment and hope for every down-and-out.

The church of St-Mary-le-Bow, in which the famous bells hang, is another example of the havoc done to buildings by London's sooty atmosphere. Already £6000 has been spent on repairs to this church, which is said to be the oldest covered building in the City, and £2000 more is needed before it can be opened again for services.

It was Mr Selfridge who paid £900 for the bells to be cleaned and recast.

HALF ROUND THE WORLD

The New Zealander mentioned in these pages not long ago who in the last 34 years has ridden 60,000 miles to fetch his post may be interested to hear of a C.N. reader who can challenge his record, though not over such a long period of years. She writes from Czecho-Slovakia.

I want to tell you that I have walked in six years nearly half the distance round the world on my own feet to get the mail for all the inhabitants of the School of Guides of Dworek Cisowy in Poland. I was going to the post office every day during six years of my stay in Dworek. It means six miles there and back every day, 180 miles a month, 2160 miles a year, 12,960 miles in the course of six years.

In summer I often took our donkey, called Dziopa, which means a country girl; but my everyday companion was our wolfdog, called Zboj; which means a highland brigand!

THE HONESTY CORPS

Somebody has been toasting Sir Edward Walter, and the C.N. is glad to say a word for him.

Sir Edward Walter was deeply troubled long ago by the nation's disregard for its retired old soldiers. They were given a tiny pension, and then ignored. About 1859 Sir Edward organised a small number into a working corps. He knew they were trustworthy, and to give the public confidence in them every member was, and still is, guaranteed for £50. From that small beginning the Corps of Commissionaires has grown in numbers and public esteem, and now an honest old soldier stands in nearly every doorway of public importance.

SOMETHING NEW WITH METALS

How Mist Plating is Done

Something new in the way of electroplating is likely to make big changes in an old and important industry.

Instead of being able merely to plate metals with other metals, such as copper with silver, iron with nickel or chromium, and so on, it is now possible to plate cloth, paper, leather, wood (indeed almost anything) not only with metals but even with such a thing as quartz.

The new art is known as mist plating. The object to be plated is placed in a vessel in which is a piece of the metal that is to be deposited upon it. The air is exhausted from the vessel until there is an almost perfect vacuum, and the metal is then heated by electrical means until it begins to volatilise.

The vapour of the boiling metal quickly deposits, as an excessively thin coating, on the object, which is said to be more perfect than the best electroplating. A perfect plating seems to be obtained with much less metal than would be required by the old method.

Mist plating will make it possible to electro-plate almost anything with any metal that can be vaporised in the apparatus.

A GALLANT DEED

The Gold Medal of the Royal Humane Society for the bravest deed of last year has been awarded to Benjamin Spencer of Johannesburg.

He is employed by the City Engineer's Department as manager of a sewage farm at Klipspruit. One day last year, when he was absent, a native worker went down a manhole on the line of the outfall sewer and was overcome by gas. Another native worker went to his help and collapsed, and the same fate overtook a third.

Then a European went halfway down the ladder, but had to come back, and just reached the surface when he collapsed also. Other natives present then refused to descend the manhole.

By now the news had reached Spencer. It seemed hopeless to try to save the men in the sewer, and descending into the poisoned air was dangerous in the extreme; but he tied a cloth over his mouth and nose and went down with a rope. One by one he raised the unconscious natives, got a rope round them, and had them hauled to the top. Then he was pulled up himself.

TEN MILES FROM CHARING CROSS

From a Beckenham schoolboy we have received an astonishing list of the birds he has seen within ten miles of Charing Cross. We cannot find room for them all, for there are 86, but here are some of the rarer ones:

Crossbill	Yellow Wagtail
Sandpiper	Grey Wagtail
Widgeon	Marsh Titmouse
Pied Flycatcher	Long-tailed Titmouse
Snipe	Golden-crested Wren
Heron	Red-backed Shrike
Siskin	Redwing
Lesser Redpoll	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Brambling	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Reed Bunting	Redshank

BENZOL FROM COAL

The large-scale extraction of benzol from coal for use as motor-fuel is to be started by the Manchester Corporation Gas Department, and promises both cheaper fuel for Manchester omnibuses and cheaper gas for the consumer.

During the war a plant was established for the extraction of benzol and toluol for use in the manufacture of explosives. Further developments in the process have since taken place at one of the Manchester gasworks, and for some time the extraction of benzol for use as motor-spirit has been going on.

2500 YEARS AFTER CONFUCIUS

A Great Descendant

The great Chinese philosopher Confucius was born in 551 B.C. and lived to be 73, dying in 478 B.C.

It is of deep interest to learn that he has a direct descendant alive today in the person of his Excellency Dr Kung, the Minister of Industries in the Chinese National Government.

The name Kung ought not to surprise us, because that was the proper Chinese name of Confucius. In full it was K'ung Fu-Tsze. Europeans knew him as Confucius because that was the Latin name given to him by the Jesuit missionaries in China.

The present Dr Kung has for his full name Kung Hsiang Hsi. He is reputed to have great learning and to be a man of very wide interests. In that he resembles his great ancestor, whose famous books, the Nine Classics, are the chief literature of the Chinese people and the basis of their moral system.

What Confucius sought to do was to gather together and put into writing the collective wisdom and best teaching of all the Chinese that had gone before him. He laid down the golden rule: "Do to others as you would that they should do to you," with its corollary: "Do not do to others what you would not wish them to do to you."

OUR SHRINKING FENLANDS

Major Gordon Fowler has just given to the Royal Geographical Society some most remarkable facts about the shrinkage of our peat-covered fenlands.

He told how an iron post, driven through about 22 feet of peat into the underlying clay in 1852, shows a most remarkable change. The post stands in Denton Fen in Huntingdonshire. The shrinkage of the peat at this point down to 1932 is shown to be over ten feet.

Generally it seems that, before the drainage and cultivation of the fens, the level of the surface in many parts was about 16 feet higher than it is now.

It is thought that with continuous improvement in drainage and cultivation the surface peat will continue to shrink until eventually farming over a large area of the fens will be on clay instead of peat.

THE NEW MAPS

If we wish to see at a glance the uses to which our land is put, we should procure the maps the Land Utilisation Society has produced of the Isle of Wight, the south part of the New Forest, and the land south-west of London.

They are printed in six colours; garden allotments and orchards in purple, heathland and moorland in yellow, dark green for forest and woodland, light green for meadowland, brown for arable or tilled land, while land agriculturally unproductive is shown in red. Private parks and golf courses have been divided into pieces used for grazing and other purposes.

The whole effect is excellent and highly instructive.

THE ALMOST HUMAN PHOTO-CELL

Among the many new things that are being set for the photo-cell (or electric eye) to do are the counting of milk and cream bottles and the counting of crates of bottles as they pass along an endless band.

It is also being used in connection with the progress of the making of welded steel tubes, turning the tubes out of the welding chamber as soon as they are ready, a process which so far has required considerable skill on the part of experienced workmen.

Another use has been to make it indicate whether printing ink will show through newspaper, and so save a costly test on the machine.