

Questions and Answers

Correspondents are informed that no attention will be paid to questions asked anonymously, of personal interest only, or those which necessitate an advertisement in answering. Questions relating to sporting events will be answered on the sporting page of The Times-Picayune every Monday. No bets will be decided through these columns. Owing to lack of space, poems cannot be printed in this column. When a stamped self-addressed envelope is sent, an effort will be made to furnish information which cannot be given in this column.

B. R. T., Gulfport, Miss.: In order to settle an argument, please give us the theory that is most generally accepted in regard to the difference in color of the various nations of the world?

The generally received opinion concerning the varieties of complexion which are found in the different races of man throughout the globe is that they are caused entirely by the influence of climate. Respecting the primary color of man the supporters of this opinion are not agreed. The opinion that climate alone will account for the various complexions of mankind is very plausible, and supported by the well-known facts that in Europe the complexion grows darker as the climate becomes warmer; that the complexion of the French is darker than that of the Germans, while the natives of the south of France and Germany are darker than those of the north; that the Italians and Spaniards are darker than the French, and the natives of the south of Italy and Spain are darker than those in the north. The complexion of the people of Africa and the East Indies is brought forward in support of this opinion; and from these and similar facts the broad and general conclusion is drawn that the complexion varies in darkness as the heat of the climate increases, and that, therefore, climate alone has produced this variety. But it can be shown that the exceptions to this general rule are very numerous; that people of dark complexions are found in the coldest climates, people of fair complexion in warm climates, people of the same complexion throughout a great diversity of climate, and races differing materially in complexion dwelling near together.

In the coldest climates of Europe, Asia and America races are found of very dark complexion. The Laplanders have short, black, coarse hair; their skins are swarthy and the irises of their eyes are black. According to Crantz, the Greenlanders have small, black eyes; their hair is dark gray all over; their face brown or olive and their hair coal black. The complexion of the Samoyedes and other tribes who inhabit the north of Asia is very similar to that of the Laplanders and Greenlanders (who are Eskimos by race). Humboldt's observations on the South American Indians illustrate and confirm the same fact. The inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, one of the coldest climates in the world, have dark complexions and hair.

Fair complexioned races are found in hot climates. Ullou informs us that the heat of Guayaquil is greater than at Carthage, and by experiment he ascertained the heat of the latter place to be greater than the heat of the hottest day in Paris, and yet in Guayaquil, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, its natives are not tawny; indeed, they are "so fresh-colored, and so finely featured, as justly to be styled the handsomest, both in the province of Quito and even in all Peru. Even in Africa darkness of complexion does not increase with the heat of the climate in all instances, and the existence of comparatively fair races in this quarter of the globe has been noticed by many travelers as early as the tenth century and has been confirmed by later writers. Radical varieties of complexion are always accompanied with radical varieties of features. The olive color of the Mongolian is not found with the features of the Malay, nor the brown color of the Malay with the features of the Mongolian, nor the black skin of the Ethiopian variety, or the red color of the American Indian united with any set of features but those which characterize their respective varieties. If, however, by no means follows that the hypotheses of different races having been originally formed must be adopted, because climate is not adequate to the production of the radical varieties of which are found among mankind. Man, as well as animals, has a propensity to form natural varieties, and the variations may in process of time involve all the tissues in color and quality of hair, color of skin, size and form of bones, especially those of the skull and limbs.

H. R. C., Houma, La.: Kindly inform me how consuls to foreign countries from the United States are appointed, and is it first necessary to pass an examination? Consuls are nominally appointed by the President, but receive their appointments on the recommendation of the Department of State. The position is not open to everyone, for the appointee must be designated, which is usually accomplished through political influence. An examination is required. If you will write to the Department of State for a copy of "Information Regarding Appointments and Promotions in the Consular Service of the United States," you will find that the pamphlet contains information you desire.

C. G. R., Lake Charles, La.: Kindly advise me as to the method of producing case-hardening.

Case-hardening is the process of converting the surface of certain kinds of malleable iron goods into steel, thereby making them harder, less liable to rust, and capable of taking on a better polish. Fire irons, gun locks, keys and other articles of limited size, are very commonly so treated, but the process is sometimes applied to large objects, such as iron railway bars. The articles are first formed, and heated to redness with powdered charcoal or cast iron, the malleable iron taking carbon from either of these to form a skin of steel upon it; the heated objects are then cooled in cold water, or in oil when they are of a delicate nature. Yellow prussiate of potash or parings of leather have also been a good deal used for coating iron articles with steel by heating them together. Some chemists consider that in this case nitrogen combines with the iron and effects the hardening. The coating of steel is very thin, seldom exceeding one-sixteenth of an inch. A Swedish ironmaster has found that a very excellent case-hardening is obtained by treating iron or steel objects with a mixture of animal matter, such as rasped leather or horn, and arsenious acid dissolved in hydrochloric acid, and heating as usual.

A. T., Covington, La.: Will you kindly inform me which of the three Wilson girls is the eldest?

Miss Margaret Woodrow Wilson is the President's oldest daughter.

G.: I built my home in a homestead association, giving my note to the homestead fund by a firm of attorneys of this city. Later having paid off the whole amount due, I received the note from the homestead and took it to the attorneys to have the mortgage cancelled. After cancelling the mortgage, they refused to return the note, saying that they always kept all notes. They finally gave it to me, stating that if it had been a negotiable note they would have kept it.

As I do not believe that any note should be denied the giver after it has been paid, will you kindly let me know whether the attorneys were authorized to retain the note?

It is the usual, but not universal, custom of notaries in this State to attach to the act passed by them cancelling a mortgage the mortgage note; hence, even though the note was negotiable, the notary would mark the note "cancelled," would draw lines through the signatures, and then pass it to his authentic act of cancellation; such is usually done, although there are exceptions.

S. L. J., Black Mountains, N. C.: Will you please give me a sketch of Gov. Isaac Johnson of Louisiana?

Isaac Johnson, tenth Governor of Louisiana, was a native of the parish of West Feliciana, and the son of an English officer who settled in Louisiana while it was a Spanish province. He studied law and became a successful attorney. His political career began as a member of the lower house of the State Legislature, after which he was elected judge of the Third District. In 1845 he was nominated by the Democratic party for Governor and was elected over William De Buys, the Whig candidate, by a majority of 1279. He was inaugurated just at the beginning of the war with Mexico, and during that contest ably upheld the cause of the United States. During his administration, pursuant to the stipulations of the Constitution, steps were taken to provide a fund for the maintenance of free public schools; the University of Louisiana was established at New Orleans, and an appropriation of \$10,000 was made for the establishment of an insane asylum at Jackson. In his message of Jan. 27, 1848, Gov. Johnson announced that the University of Louisiana had commenced operations. "If the university is sustained," he

said, "then, and perhaps not till then, the common school system will have become deeply and firmly fixed in the habits and affections of the people, who with fair trial, will fully comprehend the truth that even the learning of one man makes a thousand learned." As the Legislature failed to comply with the requirements of the Constitution in the matter of making adequate provision for the organization and support of the public schools, an extraordinary session was convened by the Governor on Dec. 4, 1848, to correct the failure, which was done by an appropriation of \$550,000 for the use of the schools. Gov. Johnson retired from office on Jan. 28, 1850, and died in New Orleans on March 15, 1853.

A. D. L., Scranton, Miss.: Kindly inform me what percentage of the English language is derived from the French.

It is impossible to state the exact percentage of any language entering into the composition of English, as English has become the most composite language spoken by man. The vocabulary of common life still is about three-fourths of Anglo-Saxon origin, but the vocabulary of literature and commerce contains a majority of words of foreign origin, chiefly Latin or Greek, coming in great part through the Romance tongues, and of those chiefly through French. The languages from which the next greatest contribution have been received are the Scandinavian (Icelandic, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian), the low German (Dutch, Flemish, etc.); Celtic, Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Hindustani, Turkish, Malay, Chinese, American Indian, etc. The words derived from the more remote languages are, however, in great part names of products or customs peculiar to the countries concerned, and few of them enter into actual English use.

M. C. H.: Please let me know where I can find the poem, "A Woman's Question," beginning:

"Do you know you have asked for the coldest thing
Ever made by the Hand above--
A woman's heart and a woman's life,
And a woman's wonderful love?"

This well-known poem has been frequently published in various collections of verse over the name of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but Granger in his work of poetical reference states that it was not written by Mrs. Browning, but by Lena Lathrop, the author of another well-known poem, "Her Answer." You will find the poem in "Choice Selections No. 13," at the New Orleans Public Library.

F. E. N., Vicksburg, Miss.: Kindly inform me what causes produced the tulip mania, and when it occurred?

It would be difficult to trace the causes that have given rise to the various manias that have possessed mankind at different times, such as the mania for painted glass that fastened itself on the minds of the French architects, and the mania for first editions which is still rampant among book-lovers. The tulip mania, an extravagant passion for the possession of tulips or tulip bulbs, arose in the seventeenth century, and a few countries of Europe escaped the "rage" of the day. Tulips were introduced into Holland late in the sixteenth century, and the soil and climate being favorable, their cultivation formed an important branch of industry, and the plants became more and more in request as they increased in variety and beauty. The Dutch merchants therefore made the purchase and sale of these bulbs a part of their regular trade, and supplied other European nations with their importations. What was at first a legitimate trade afterward developed into the wildest speculation, which rose to its greatest height between 1634 and 1637. For a single bulb of the species *Semper Augustus*, 13,000 florins, about \$5200, were once paid, and for three, 80,000 florins, about \$12,000, and equally extravagant sums for other varieties. Men then dealt in bulbs as they do now in stocks and shares. At length the fictitious trade collapsed. Many persons who had suffered ruinous losses broke their contracts; confidence in the ultimate realization of the money which the bulbs were supposed to represent then vanished, and ruin spread far and wide.

Old Subscriber: Kindly answer the following questions: 1. In what States of the Union does the negro population exceed the white? 2. Is it possible for a man to be an habitual drunkard, and has the term "habitual drunkard" ever been defined by the courts, and if so what is their definition?

1. In Mississippi and South Carolina. The white population in Mississippi in 1910 was 789,627; the negro population 1,099,487. In South Carolina, in the same year, the white population was given by the census as 679,557, and the negro population as 855,843.

2. Bouvier in his "Law Dictionary" gives the following definition of an habitual drunkard, as defined by the various States:

"A person given to inebriety or the excessive use of intoxicating drink, who has lost the power or the will, by frequent indulgence, to control his appetite for it (18 Pa. 172; 5 Gray 85). One who has the habit of indulging in intoxicating drinks so firmly fixed that he becomes drunk whenever the temptation is presented by his being near where liquor is sold (35 Mich. 210). The custom or habit of getting drunk; the constant indulgence in such stimulants as wine, brandy, and whiskey, whereby intoxication is produced; not the ordinary use, but the habitual use of them; the habit should be actual and confirmed, but need not be continuous, or even of daily occurrence (4 So. Rep. La.). If there is a fixed habit of drinking to excess, so as to disqualify a person from attending to his business during the principal portion of the time usually devoted to business, it is habitual intemperance (19 Cal. 217; but see 53 Ia. 511)."

By the laws of some States such persons are classed with idiots, lunatics, etc., in regard to the care of property; and in some they are liable to punishment. Habitual drunkenness is also defined in Act No. 157, of the acts of Louisiana of 1894.

I. G. J., Pineville, La.: Please give us some information in regard to pellagra; what produces it, whether it is curable, and whether it is contagious?

While the exact cause of pellagra is still undetermined and no definite form of treatment has been devised, the tendency of opinion is that it can be cured when treatment is begun before the disease is too far advanced. After 200 years of study in European countries, the pellagra problem is still unsolved.

Three theories have been advanced as to the cause of the disease: (1) The zelestic theory of Ballardini, dating from 1845, giving corn poison from excessive use of corn products as the cause; (2) the col-

loured products poison theory of Mizel in 1911, and (3) the sand-fly theory of Sambon, dating from 1910. The first two rest on malnutrition, the last on the action of a parasite. Sambon's investigations were made in Italy, and his conclusions were so well grounded that the spoiled-malt theory having failed to find sufficiently strong supporting evidence in this country, attempts were made to substantiate Sambon's findings here. The grounds on which Sambon based his conclusions may be outlined as follows: (1) The endemic centers of pellagra in Italy have remained the same since the disease was first described; (2) the pellagra season coincides with the season of the appearance of the full-fledged sand fly, even to the extent that if the spring is early or late the sand fly is early or late in appearing, and pellagra cases are correspondingly early or late in their appearance; (3) in centers of pellagra infection whole families are attacked simultaneously; (4) in nonpellagrous districts the disease does not spread with the advent of a pellagrin from a pellagrous district; (5) when a family has been removed from a pellagrous to a nonpellagrous district the children born in the former district are pellagrins, while the children born subsequent to removal do not develop the disease; (6) the disease is not hereditary, although infants a few months old may become infected, especially if taken to the fields where their mothers work during the sand-fly season; (7) pellagra is not contagious, but is transmitted to each individual by an infected sand fly.

Roberts of Georgia found conditions similar to those described by Sambon in Italy. A like investigation was later undertaken by Prof. S. J. Hunter, whose work is not completed, but the evidence thus far obtained points to the sand fly as a probable cause. While the sand fly found in this country is not of the species referred to by Sambon, yet all the cases reported in Kansas are found in those counties included in the sand-fly territory, and as none of the patients have been out of the State, it seems that the cause is local.

A Subscriber: Kindly let me know if there is any premium on a United States 20-cent piece, dated 1875.

Premium 22 cents.

H. B. C., Bogalusa, La.: Please let me know if there is a premium on a well-preserved coin minted in 1821, value 10 cents, Liberty facing left, surrounded by thirteen stars.

Premium 10 cents to 20 cents.

L. C.: Please let me know if there is a premium on a United States half dollar, dated 1829.

If the coin does not show any scratches or nicks, premium 52 cents.

G. E. C.: Kindly inform me if there is a premium on a United States half dollar, dated 1874.

No premium.

L. J. S., Gretna, La.: Kindly advise if there are any premiums on the following coins: 1. United States 1-cent piece, dated 1802. 2. United States half dime, dated 1835. 3. United States 3-cent piece, dated 1860.

1. Premium 10 cents to 50 cents.
2. No premium.
3. If nickel and proof, premium 5 cents to 10 cents, and if silver premium 25 cents to 50 cents.