

Our Query and Reply Department



What is the smallest state in Europe?
The autonomous republic of Moresnet, on the boundary between Germany and Belgium. Moresnet has an area of barely one and one-quarter miles and a population of 3,500. A boundary commission, settling frontiers after the fall of Napoleon in 1814, was unable to agree on the ownership of this tiny piece of land and finally left the question for future settlement. Meanwhile it was to be administered jointly by the two states. The joint administration soon resulted in an administration by neither state, and the community became self governing under the protection of Prussia and Belgium. In 1841 the two guaranteeing countries gave the district its own independent administration. On reaching the military age the youth of Moresnet has the choice of serving either Belgium or Germany.

What is the meaning of "El Dorado"?
A name given by Spaniards to "the Golden Land," which was supposed to exist somewhere on the western hemisphere.

What became of "520 per cent Miller"?
William F. Miller, nicknamed "520 per cent Miller," and his partner, Leslie, operated a concern called the Franklin syndicate that duped many. Both Miller and Leslie were indicted Nov. 25, 1899, but the former fled to Canada. He was captured Feb. 8 and was sent to Sing Sing June 3, 1900.

Can you tell me how to take the squeak out of shoes?
Saturate the soles with linseed oil, sweet oil or melted lard. Let the soles of the shoes stand in one of these lubricants overnight.

How is the red fire in fireworks produced?
By nitrate of strontium, which burns with a red flame.

Did New York city experience an earthquake in the eighties?
New York experienced a moderate earthquake shock on Sunday, Aug. 10, 1884. An earthquake which had its center in Charleston, S. C., on Aug. 31, 1886, was also felt there.

Are there any figures showing the comparative growth of telegraph and telephone wire mileage in the United States?
The telegraph was introduced in 1844 and the telephone in 1877. Official reports in 1880 showed 291,231 miles of telegraph wire and 34,305 miles of telephone wire; in 1902 there were 1,318,350 miles of telegraph wire and 4,900,451 miles of telephone; in 1910, 1,849,000 miles of telegraph and 16,634,000 miles of telephone.

Did flogging ever exist as a punishment in the United States navy?
It did formerly, but was abolished in 1850.

Please explain a writer's reference to the year when October had only twenty-one days.
The reference could apply only to the year 1582, when, by order of Pope Gregory XIII., the old style of reckoning time was dropped and the new style was adopted. This was done on Oct. 4 by eliminating ten days of the month, from the 5th to the 14th, both inclusive, thus leaving only twenty-one days. In the history of that period, 1582, you will not find any event recorded as occurring between Oct. 4 and 15, the intervening days being blank.

Who was the real Josh Billings, and where did he come from?
"Josh Billings" was the pseudonym of Henry Wheeler Shaw (1818-1885), who was born at Lanesborough, Mass. He was an auctioneer for some time and afterward branched into lecturing and writing. His productions, consisting of humorous essays, etc., characterized by a grotesque mode of spelling, were mostly contributed to the New York Weekly. But his most successful publication was the "Josh Billings' Farmers' Almanac," published annually from 1870 to 1880.

Please give a simple rule for finding the surface area of a circle.
Multiply the radius, or half the diameter, by itself and then multiply the product by 3.1416, taking care of the decimal point. A circle six feet in diameter would have a radius of three feet; 3 by 3 is 9, and this by 3.1416 gives 28.27 feet as the superficial area of the circle.

What was the Nika rebellion, and when and where did it occur?
The Nika sedition took place in Constantinople in January, 532 A. D. There was rioting for nearly a week, during which about 30,000 lives were lost, and Justinian was indebted for his life and his throne to the heroism of the Empress Theodosia. The Blues and the Greens, two factions, united for a day against the emperor, taking "Nika!" ("Overcome!") as their counter-slogan and warcry. But the Blues ended by turning on the Greens and massacring them.

How may one remove a kerosene spot from a dark blue cheviot skirt?
Cover the spot with blotting paper or brown paper and press with a hot iron. Repeat if necessary. Or cover with cornmeal or French chalk. Let stand for a day, dust off and press.

When did Colonel Robert Ingersoll die?
July 21, 1899.

When did T. De Witt Talmage begin preaching?
He was graduated in 1856 at the New Brunswick (N. J.) Theological seminary and was ordained pastor the same year, taking the pastorate of a Reformed Dutch church in Belleville, N. J.

What is the value of a gold dollar of 1849 in good condition?
\$1.75.

Was the north in favor of the abolition of slavery prior to the civil war? If so, why were Wendell Phillips and Lloyd Garrison mobbed for advocating it?

Prior to and during the first years of the war the sentiment in the north was by no means unanimous for abolition. Many people, while opposed to slavery per se, were equally opposed to interference with the rights of the southern slaveholders. Others tacitly favored the extension of slavery rather than its abolition. It was these last probably that instigated the attacks on Phillips and Garrison in Boston and other places, as both of them were leaders of the so-called "Abolition" party and prominent in the movement to do away with slavery.

Did the platform of the Republican party in the campaign which culminated in the election of Abraham Lincoln advocate the abolition of slavery?

Not specifically, although many abolitionists were enrolled under the party banner. The platform, however, did contain a plank unqualifiedly opposing the "extension" of slavery in any of the non-slaveholding states or in such states as might later be taken into the Union.

What is the meaning of R. S. V. P.?
It is an abbreviation by initial letters of the French "repondez s'il vous plait," meaning "Reply if you please."

Please state whether the assassin of Abraham Lincoln was ever captured. If so, when?

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, was killed near Fredericksburg, Va., April 26, 1865, by Sergeant Boston Corbett. Booth killed Lincoln in Ford's theater, Washington, April 14.

What did the term Alta California as once used mean?

Alta is Spanish for high or upper, and Alta California was formerly applied to upper or New California, which is now a state in the Union, to distinguish it from Lower or old California, now a territory of Mexico.

Is there a United States law governing the sale of cocaine?

There is no national law regulating the sale of cocaine and its derivatives, but several states have enacted such a law.

What kinds of lightning are there?

Lightning is classified as follows:
One.—Striped or zigzag, developed with great rapidity.
Two.—Sheet, covering a large surface.
Three.—Globular, when the electric fluid appears condensed and is developed at a comparatively low velocity.
Four.—Phosphoric, when the fluid appears to rest upon the edges of the clouds.

Why does the secretary of the treasury make his annual report to the congress when all the other heads of departments make theirs to the president?

Because the levying of taxes, the raising of revenue and the making of appropriations are matters of such importance that congress prefers to have the views and recommendations of the secretary directly from him.

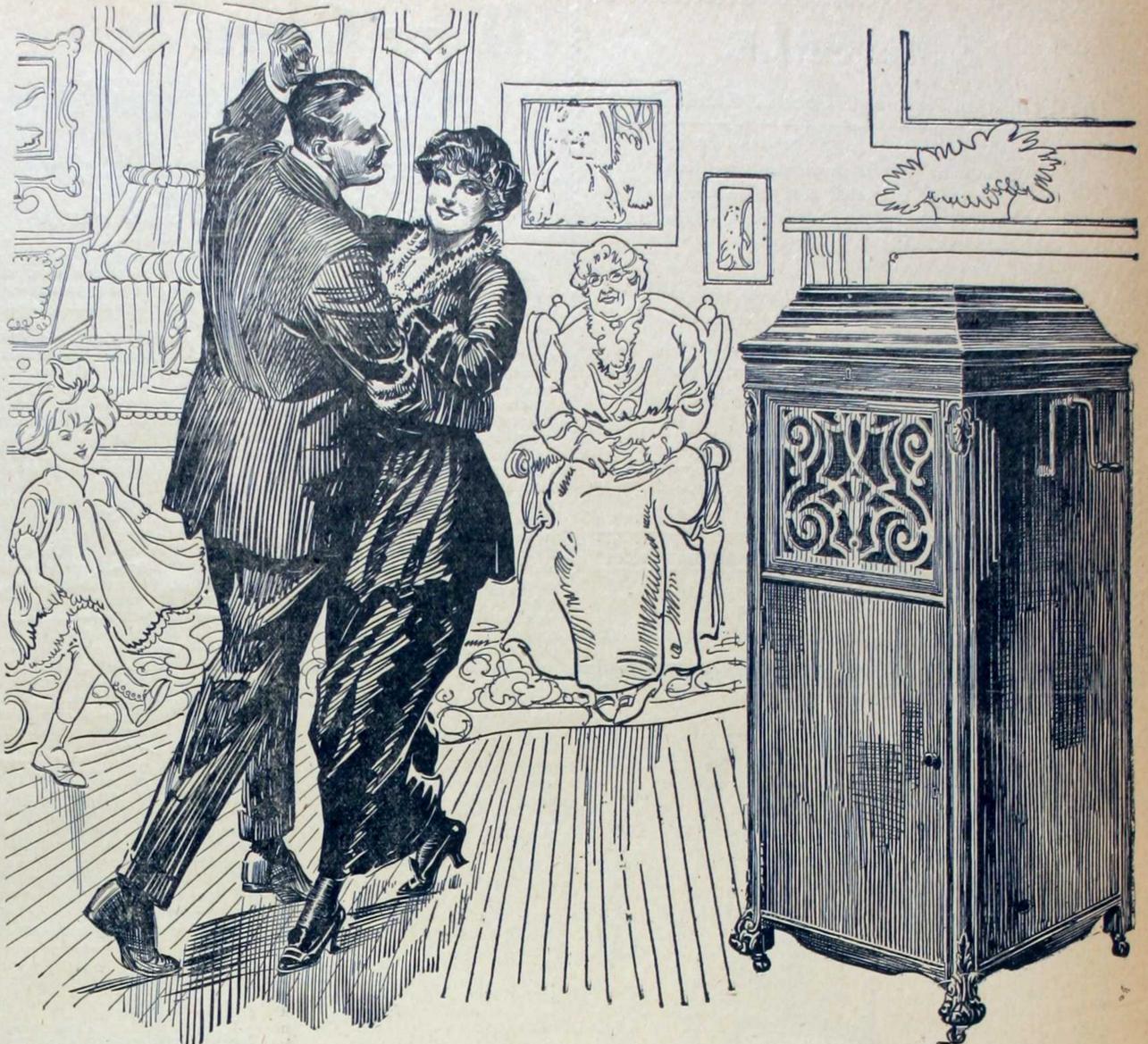
How does the pay of our members of congress compare with that of the lawmakers in other principal countries?

Members of the British house of commons are paid \$2,000 a year; of the French assembly, \$3,000 a year; of the German reichstag, \$750 a session, with a deduction of \$5 for each day's absence; of the United States congress, \$7,500 a year, and 20 cents a mile going to and from the capital.

Please state the value in American money of the principal foreign coins.

As nearly as can be stated in American money, the English penny is 2 cents; shilling, 24 1-3 cents; pound sterling, \$4.86; French franc, 19 cents; German mark, 24 cents; Italian lire, 19 cents; Russian ruble, 67 cents; Spanish peseta, 19 cents; Mexican peso, 89 cents; Central American peso, 83 cents.

Has a woman ever been elected to congress?
No.



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Correct Tango Steps

The Tango, as it is generally danced, is nothing more or less than a "one-step" dressed up a bit, with a few fancy steps.

There are, of course, many fancy steps which different individuals introduce to make the dance a little more difficult, but the steps given are those generally used in what most people call the Tango.

The man takes four steps backwards—that is always the beginning of the dance. Four steps, as if you were starting to "one-step," only slowly.

After the first four steps the real "first step" of the tango begins. The man takes one step back with the right foot, then two steps with the left, then bringing the right foot back to its original position with a slight bend of the right knee.

Count one, two, three, four. On count one the man steps back on the left foot. Swings the right out a little to the right side on the second count. On the third count place it directly back of the left, and on the fourth count bend the knees slightly, then start right off again with the left. That makes one, two, three, four; the left foot one count and the right foot three counts.

The girl does just the opposite. Count one, forward on right; count two, swing left out to side; count three, left goes in front of right, and on count four slight bend of the knees. Then start off again with the right on the "one." That is the first step and the foundation of the tango.

The "Three-Step"

Then go into the "three-step," which is like this: The couple stand more side by side, but with their arms in regular dancing position, and the arms that were bent at the elbow for the first step are now extended straight out in front of them. Then they take one, two, three steps, and on the third step lift the foot off the ground as if to kick. The foot, however, is lifted only about four inches off the ground.

In this step the partners use opposite feet, and, in fact, that rule goes in most all the tango steps: the man starting with the left and the girl with the right, which amounts, in correct counting, to one, two, three, and on the three a very tiny kick. For the man left, right, left, and the kick with the left. For the girl right, left, right, and the kick with the right. In this step they are practically walking along.

The "Scissors Step"

Step three is known as the "scissors step." The couple stand in front of each other, with arms retaining their same position—the man's arm about the girl's waist and the girl's hand on his shoulder.

Step forward on opposite feet; bring other feet over; then turn on them. Do this step both ways, counting one, two, three, which keeps you going from right to left.

The "Four-Step"

Next comes the "four-step." Same position as in the "three-step." You walk four steps forward, starting as usual with the opposite feet. At the end of four steps you turn and walk four steps back, retaining the same hold and looking over your shoulders, as it were. In this step a couple can go all around the room making triangles. The four-step is the nearest step to the one-step that there is in the tango.