

How Science Has Improved on King Solomon's Wisdom

A Chicago Hospital's Clever System of Recording Baby Foot-Prints, Which Makes It Impossible

for Any Doubt About Its Identity Ever to Arise



Impression of a baby's foot which will never change its lines.



The Famous Painting of "The Judgment of Solomon," by Raphael.

"And the King (Solomon) said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. "And the King said, Divide the living child in two and give half to the one and half to the other."

I Kings, Chapter III, v. 24, 25



This footprint can never be confused with that of any other baby.



The Nurse in the Chicago Hospital Rubs Printer's Ink on the New-born Baby's Foot.



Then the Nurse Takes an Impression of the Foot on a Sheet of Paper.

"If the footprint system had only been known in Solomon's day, the world might have been poorer by one proof of his wisdom—but the real mother would have been spared a most painful ordeal."

An immense amount of unhappiness and injustice has been caused in the world by the failure to establish a person's identity—to prove beyond question that he was a certain mother's child and could not possibly be any other.

All this trouble in future can be avoided by the new system of "taking baby's foot-prints," established in a Chicago hospital. As long ago as King Solomon's time the difficulty that might arise about a child's disputed parentage was recognized. Most people remember the story about Solomon's judgment as related in the first book of Kings, Chapter III, and if they don't, it should be recalled to them.

There were two mothers in Jerusalem in King Solomon's time, persons very low in the social scale, as we might say. They came running to King Solomon and told him an extraordinary story. The first said that they both lived in the same house and that she became a mother there and that the other woman had a baby three days later. There was no other person in the house at the time.

The first complainant alleged that the other woman suffocated her own baby in the night and, while the complainant was asleep, stole her living child and put the dead baby at her breast in its place. When the poor mother woke up she was holding a dead baby. The second woman denied the story and declared that the other woman had really lost her own child and that she was trying to steal a live one. All the wise men around King Solomon thought that this was an insoluble problem, and the King appeared to think so, too.

Then King Solomon, acting very abruptly, said to a fierce soldier, "Bring a sword, divide the living child in two and give half to the one and half to the other." The unfortunate baby, as many ancient pictures show, was held up by one leg, while the ruthless soldiers prepared to chop it exactly in two, as if it were an animal's carcass. We must assume that King Solomon gave them a secret signal not to act hastily.

Immediately there was a shriek. The woman who had made the complaint said: "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." But the other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."

King Solomon immediately decided that the woman who was ready to give up the child rather than see it killed was really the mother and ordered that it should be given to her.

This story shows that King Solomon personally administered justice to the lowest of his people, and it is one of the best examples of his proverbial wisdom, for he had prayed the Lord to give him "an understanding heart to judge the people" before riches, long life or any of the other desirable things.

For over 2,500 years that has been regarded as one of the best instances of clear judgment. Now science tells us that the same problem can be decided with more certainty by a simple device, and that we need not depend on the slim chance of finding a judge with King Solomon's extraordinary wisdom.

At the Chicago Lying-in Hospital the nurse in charge takes the new-born baby's foot in her hand and covers it gently with printer's ink by means of a roller. Then she transfers an impression of the sole of the foot to a sheet of paper. Then she repeats the process with the other foot.

Finally she cleans off the ink with some alcohol.

The baby may squeal a little, but the proceeding does not do him the slightest harm, and if he knew how it was safeguarding his rights he would be delighted.

Other precautions are taken to preserve baby's identity. A piece of tape is tied round its wrist bearing a number and a similar number is tied to the mother. The baby's name is also written out on a piece of adhesive plaster and pasted on its back. Some very sad cases of confused identity have arisen in large maternity hospitals. Nurses have taken the babies away for some purpose and have failed to return them to the right mothers. No such cruel mistakes can occur in this great institution.

Miss Jessie Christie, superintendent of nurses in the hospital, and Miss Mabel Carmon, chief nurse of the birthroom, regard the footprints as the most valuable method of identification.

Every child is born with a complicated system of lines on the soles of its feet and the surface of its hands. These never change. Though fingers and feet grow in

size, the lines grow with them and the pattern remains true to its first form.

Evidently this method of identification was suggested by the system of keeping finger print records, first introduced by the late M. Bertillon, of Paris, and now used by every important detective force in the civilized world.

It has been found, however, that it is much easier to take footprints than hand or finger prints of a baby. The foot is larger and the baby curls its hands up so persistently that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory impression. It must be remembered that the finger prints used by the police are usually taken from persons over twenty years old.

Upon the foot as well as upon the hand there is a complicated system of small lines, which sweep all over the inner surface, and at certain points, generally on the tips of the fingers, form a kind of centre. These central formations are known as whirlpools, loops and composites. Many persons have the same general type of line formation, but no two persons have exactly the same pattern, and any one with a little experience can

infallibly identify a man from his finger prints.

The police find the prints of the tips of the fingers particularly useful, because few persons allow calluses to form on the tips, which are the most essential agents of the sense of touch. Even when there are calluses, as is common in the palms of the hands, the lines still appear through them.

The Finger Print Division of the United States Navy has classified 1,024 primary types of finger prints and 11,000 secondary types. The same authority states that there are 1,700,000,000 people in the world and no two have finger prints that cannot be distinguished from one another.

The line patterns on the feet and hands have been handed down from ancestors of countless thousands of years ago and do not change during the life of an individual. The monkeys have similar lines.

The lines are due to ridges of little papillae in the true underlying skin, which contain the sensory nerves and blood vessels.

These ridges are reproduced by the outer skin or epidermis. The epidermis is constantly being worn away, but as it is renewed the lines are renewed with it.

The finger tips have furnished a wonderfully successful method of tracking professional criminals. There is an oily secretion in the skin, and when the finger tips touch a brass doorknob, a pane of glass or any smooth, hard substance, they leave an impression. If this impression coincides with one already recorded at police headquarters, the police know just who the man is.

The cleverest criminals have resorted to all sorts of tricks to remove the evidence of their finger prints. Some have gone so far as to slice off their finger tips with a knife, but apart from the shocking pain this must cause it has the disadvantage of destroying the best part of their sense of touch.

Others have committed their crimes in kid gloves, but here again the sense of touch is deadened. The cleverest trick has been to cover the finger tips with gold-beater's skin, which leaves sensation largely unimpaired.

It is satisfactory to know that this human peculiarity can be made to serve some nobler object than catching criminals.

If the system of keeping baby foot-prints had been adopted long ago, some of the most remarkable romances and tragedies of history would never have happened, or, at least, would have lost their dramatic features.

The famous Tichborne case in England, for instance, could hardly have happened. In that case a rough man from Australia turned up and declared that he was the missing heir to the great, ancient Tichborne estates and title, who had been lost at sea. Strange to say, the missing heir's own mother identified the claimant as her son. Families were split up by the controversy, many persons ruined and finally the claimant was sent to jail for perjury. If the foot prints of the missing man had been preserved the claimant would have been laughed out of court.

Similar arguments apply to the Charlie Ross case in America. For over forty years an estimable and wealthy family was kept in torture by impostors who claimed to be the lost boy or to be able to produce him. There could have been no doubt in any of these cases if an impression of the real Charlie Ross's foot prints had been taken at birth.

Nature's Spring Tonics from Field and Garden

THE new green vegetables, now so plentiful by a happy stroke of nature, are not only nutritious, but also contain medicinal properties so much needed at this time of the year.

All Spring greens might well be called veritable "house-cleaners" of the human system. The cellulose, or waste, in vegetable foods encourages the peristaltic motion of the stomach and lower intestines; hence vegetable eaters are very rarely troubled with constipation or torpid livers.

During May and June an excellent array of Spring products is to be had not only by city inhabitants who patronize the markets, but by those living in the rural districts as well. Most of the latter depend entirely upon their home-raised products and upon wild edible greens.

Fortunately, too, we are realizing more and more every day the superior advantage of getting our medicine from the markets rather than from the doctors; for nature, after all, dispenses the best tonic, and certainly that most pleasant to take.

Nowadays the careful mother and housewife knows her dietetics too well to have to administer the time-honored bitter dose to a protesting family. Instead she buys spinach, asparagus, rhubarb, dandelion,

Spring onions, etc., the food value of which seems designed especially to take away that tired, droopy feeling. She prepares them tastily and the unsuspecting family takes the dose with a relish.

Since not only the succulent cultivated vegetables, but many edible wild weeds unfamiliar to the majority of housekeepers are plentiful now, they should constitute a large portion of the daily menu. In the Spring category of those particularly rich in mineral properties and of high medicinal value are dandelion, both wild and cultivated; rhubarb, poke shoots, asparagus, lettuce, water cress, scallions, beet tops, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, sour dock, sorrel, lamb's quarters, purslane and horse radish.

Green vegetables, such as asparagus, spinach and dandelions, lend themselves easily to the combinations of milk in the cream soups. These soups are nutritious, easy of digestion, and with whole wheat bread and butter form an admirable luncheon or supper dish for children.

Even a tablespoonful of greens left over will make a delicious cream soup. In washing and preparing greens for cooking it is well to remember that if they are thrown into salted water after washing it will thoroughly rid them of any insect life which might otherwise go unnoticed.

Asparagus and all delicately flavored vegetables should be cooked in very little water, just enough to cover, but dandelion and strong flavored vegetables require a generous quantity. All greens should be cooked with the cover partly off. This gives them better color and a more delicious flavor. The average housekeeper is careless as to the time of cooking vegetables, yet a vegetable is as much injured by too much or too little cooking as is a loaf of bread or cake. The water should be kept boiling constantly until vegetables are done. To let it stop impairs the flavor. In cooking greens a ham bone or bacon drippings which have been saved from time to time will be found to supply a flavor that cannot be obtained in any other way.

Onions used discreetly are a tasty addition to any greens used in salad form. When shredded and mixed with mayonnaise they make a palatable dressing and are very wholesome.

Lettuce, since it contains alkalies, requires an acid condiment. Dandelions form one of the most wholesome greens, containing as they do "taraxacum," which acts on the liver. Dandelion roots are cut into slices, dried and used medicinally by many instead of procuring their supply from the pharmacist as most city folk do.