

In Famine-Stricken China.



Thousands of Chinese are perishing daily, it is reported, as a result of the famine and plague that has visited their country. Here is a photograph of the king of beggars in the famine district.

STORY OF SOUTH SEA SHARK.

He Swallows an Alarm Clock, with Most Unusual Results.

While crossing among the South sea islands 30 odd years ago in our private yacht, the Haute Flyer, we were much annoyed by a large Irish setter shark that persisted in following the ship, says a writer in the Minneapolis Journal. During the night the shark would often climb up on deck and tip over the garbage can. At one time Henry Williams, a sailor before the mast, was bitten on the leg by the brute. He aimed a kick at the brute, who growled, showed his teeth, and sunk his fangs into Williams' limb before leaping over the rail into the sea.

One day the cook, annoyed at his alarm clock—which persisted in going off furiously at all hours of the night—threw the timepiece overboard. The shark, always on hand for dainty tidbits from the galley, took the time of day at one gulp. For two days after that we heard the clock going in a muffled way from the interior of the surprised shark, who was often seen with one fin on his head and the other on the pit of his stomach, evidently trying to diagnose his clock case.

We were standing on the stern of the ship one evening watching the shark, who was evidently feeling pretty sick. Suddenly the clock went off on him and the sailors, counting the strokes, noticed that it struck 23. When the shark heard this, he turned up and died before our eyes.

WAS LOVE'S LABOR LOST.

Woman's First Act of Philanthropy Decidedly a Failure.

A lady who was recently appointed a visitor to a hospital for children, fearing that poor children failed to receive the same attention bestowed on those of richer parents, paid her first visit to the institution, intending to effect a change. In a ward she found a tiny boy quite alone. He informed her that there was another boy in the wards but that he was being examined before a clinic. The lady looked around her for evidences of neglect on the part of the attendants. A suit of clothes lay huddled on a chair. Folding them in an orderly manner, she said:

"Surely my dear, these trousers are too long for you by several inches."

"Yes," replied the boy.

"A sin and a shame," cried she, and took a "companion" from her bag. She sat down and cut off the legs of the garment and hemmed the edges.

"Now," she said, triumphantly when the task was complete, "they will fit you better."

"The other boy's taller than me," replied the child. "They belong to him."

Chile Welcomes Japanese.

In Chile, at any rate the Japanese immigrant is made welcome. The Chilean government offers considerable inducements to agricultural and fishing immigrants. Forty acres of rich land are given outright to each settler, 20 more to each son 18 years of age or more, a yoke of oxen, a set of farm implements and \$15 a month in cash for the first year. This is regarded as an excellent inducement to the Japanese farmer to leave his little farm of something less than an acre and go to Chile. Moreover, a practical monopoly of the entire fishing industry of a country having 3,000 miles of coast abounding in splendid fish, but practically without a fishing class, holds out an additional bait to a people versed in sea fishing.

Bell Warns Florists of Danger.

An electric bell tinkled sharply beside the florist's desk. "Frost," he said, and ran hatless to the greenhouses. "The area had sunk," the florist explained on his return. "The watchman had fallen asleep. But for my frost bell I'd have lost hundreds of dollars. Frost bells are now pretty generally used by florists and fruit growers." He went on: "An electrical contrivance is connected with a thermometer and when the mercury falls to a certain point it suits yourself—a bell rings a warning in your house or office. Many a crop of winter fruit and flowers has been saved in the past years or two by the clever little frost bell."

Rebukes His Honor.

Henry W. Ely, well known Westfield (Mass.) lawyer, once defended a man who was on trial for murder. While cross-examining a witness he was interrupted by the judge, who informed him that he was unnecessarily using too much of the court's valuable time. Turning squarely around, Mr. Ely replied: "Your honor, this is not a question of time, but a question of civility." It is needless to say that Mr. Ely continued the cross-examination.

Where Her Father Was.

The daughter of the house had just returned from boarding school. Her finishing branches had made her a little sensitive. "Is your father out in the woodshed splitting wood?" the caller asked her. "No," replied the haughty girl, "papa is at the town meeting splitting inbittives."

Immense Sum Spent for Towels.

The growing use of small, individual towels instead of roller towels has brought on increase in the national expenditure. Few hotels now use roller towels, the germ theory having made such an impression on the public mind. Last year about \$4,800,000 was spent for towels.

ALL BLUNDER AT TIMES.

Occasional Misstep No Cause for Lifelong Regret.

Has it ever occurred to you that it may be a portion of your part on the programme of life to make mistakes and appear ridiculous in the eyes of your fellowmen?

Once in awhile, for purposes too secret for you to fathom, some one must play the fool in order that the procession of numbers may move off right and the climax appear as was intended by the great master of ceremonies, whose name is Destiny.

Don't mind too much, then, your failures and mistakes and foolishnesses. All men have known such moments of humiliation. The wisest and most notable were never wise and noble at all times.

What right have you to expect always to shine in the eyes of others—to play always a heroic and applauded part? It is part of your relations with men that you should at times appear in a foolish and ignominious cast.

Accept it all as a portion of life, and your actions will take their right place in perspective, leaving no bitterness or remorse or humiliation.

BUYING LAND IN KOREA.

Business Transaction into Which Tact Enters Largely.

Land buying in Korea is a process which calls for both time and patience. A Japanese investigator who has been making inquiries on the subject has found that the price at which land may be procured differs greatly with the skill of the purchaser.

Any hasty attempt to buy hurts the feelings of the owner and creates opposition. The best plan is to select the district on which one fancy rests, and either settle quietly down there or send an agent to do so instead, letting it be known in a general sort of way that one is disposed to buy.

Then the Koreans who class transactions in land in the same category with the sale or purchase of movable chattels—that is to say, as a mere means of procuring or spending money—will of themselves come and offer to sell. Then, by the exercise of a little patience, a considerable tract may be very cheaply acquired in a few years.

Evil of Believing in Signs.

A man who saw the moon over his right shoulder and was feeling pretty safe for the month began the next day by falling over the railing of the back porch with a pan of ashes in his hand. There was just one comment on the porch to throw him against the railing, which was just high enough to give him the necessary tip and the law of gravitation and the ashes did the rest. The neighbor who saw him alight said it resembled the string of some old Fourth of July cannon loaded with the old-fashioned smoky powder and charged with ashpan, grief and profanity. The man cursed everything from the new moon to breakfast. That's what you get for believing in signs. And yet you can not tell from the context of the story whether or not the man was trying to empty his ashes on a Friday. That might explain something—Minneapolis Journal.

Nitric Acid from Air.

Sir William Crookes has discovered how to get nitric acid from the air, but the discovery has long been looked for. "I have before me," writes a correspondent of the London Chronicle, "a manual of chemistry in which I find a eulogy of nitrogen and its compounds, such as nitric acid and the so-called compound ammonias. 'Who ever,' says the inspired chemist, 'succeeds in producing those bodies in abundance from the nitrogen of the atmosphere without the use of organic materials will not only amass a princely fortune but must rank as one of the greatest benefactors of the human race, inasmuch as such a discovery would open up an almost infinite supply of matter for the fertilization of the land.'"

Common Sense and the Play.

There are many plays in which the characters exercised a little common sense or asked an obvious question. The complications would be straightened out and the play would suddenly stop long before it reached its destined end. Edward E. Rose, the playwright, best known for his dramatizations, was discussing with a friend a play of this type. "Why doesn't the heroine ask the hero such and such a question at the end of the second act?" the friend asked. "Because," Mr. Rose replied, "if she did she'd be discharged."—The Reader.

Her Premonition.

"Claribel," called out the gentleman in a loud, rasping, and emphatic voice from the head of the staircase at 11 30 p. m., "you tell that long-haired, saw-toothed, spider-legged fellow in the parlor there to take his hat and walk off, and if ever he comes here again I'll kick him right through his necktie!" Alfred, murmured the young woman, pensively, "something seems to tell me we'd better part."—Stray Stories.

Grandfather's Likeness So Natural.

At a gathering of artists on several of the older ones got together and began telling of the marvelous masterpieces they had produced in their days. When everything had quieted down a bit an old man ever in the corner was heard to remark: "Yes, I once painted a likeness of my grandfather, and it was so natural that I had to take it down twice a week and have it."—Judge's Library.

GAS AND ITS CENTENARY.

Illuminant Was First Looked Upon with Much Alarm.

Gas as a practical illuminant, passed its centenary mark on January 28. On that day in 1807 there was in London "a new and singular spectacle," according to the account of a visitor, "the whole range of Pall Mall, from St. James' to Cockspur street, was lighted up by means of lamps fed with gas instead of cotton and oil, and certainly in a style of much superior brilliancy. This was the first instance of street lighting by coal gas in London, or in any other city. The merit of the enterprise is due to Winsor, a German company-promoting expert, who was especially interested in the question of economic fuel. His pamphlets, however, contained so much extravagant fanaticism and quackery that they retarded rather than furthered his schemes, which met with an extraordinary amount of opposition, even from enlightened people.

Mr. Walter Scott wrote that there was a madman proposing to light London with smoke. A awful consequence were predicted. The gas would poison the air and blow up the inhabitants. It was explosive, dangerous of fumes and unmanageable, the pipes covering it would be hot and apt to produce conflagrations. The lamp-lighters to a man opposed the new mode of street lighting and it is curious to notice the great hesitation as to its possibility expressed in contemporary scientific and popular literature.

When a chartered company was at length formed in 1810 the shareholders were pitted as idiots, and David Pollock for 39 years its governor, received some extraordinary answers in doggerel rhyme from otherwise sober and staid individuals whom he had asked to take shares.

MAN OF STRANGE CHARACTER.

First Duke of Marlborough Well Called Human Enigma.

Herbert Paul, in his book on Queen Anne of England, paints a new picture of the great duke of Marlborough.

He was not truthful. He was not straightforward. He was not honest in his love of money and his capacity for hoarding it, he revealed those wretched misers who have done no more than contemplate their gains.

And yet such are the strange freaks in which nature indulges this mean and selfish intruder was endowed with perfect courage, with an irresistible charm of manner, with a temper which even his wife failed to disturb, with a brain that no sophistry could obscure, and with a military genius before which criticism is lumby silent.

He was treacherous even in a treacherous age. Wholly devoid of cruelty, and by nature humane, he is said never to have sacrificed an unnecessary life. He used his fellow creatures for his own purposes, and when he had no further use for them he forgot their existence. He made his plans and carried them out with the absolute efficiency of sheer intelligence and the serene implacability of impersonal fate.

An Old-Time Playful Prisoner.

The centenary has been noted recently in London of what the Annual Register called "a most unparalleled atrocity." It was only the theft of a pocket handkerchief from a pocket, but the circumstances of the deed explain the vehemence of this denunciation. Four men were on their trial for assaulting a man in his house at Ponder's End, putting him in fear and stealing from him, and one of them relieved the tedium of the trial, which lasted eight hours, by picking the pocket of one of the turnkeys as he stood in the dock. An official had the presence of mind to order the restoration of the handkerchief, and the prisoner obeyed, "with the most careless indifference," but the court, we read, "were horror-struck. Justice, however, pulled itself together sufficiently to sentence all four men to death."

He Lost His Nose.

A butcher in New Orleans sent his apprentice boy with two knives to be sharpened. After a keen edge had been placed on them, the boy started back for the shop. On the way he began toying one of the knives in the air, the same as he had seen a juggler do. He didn't prove to be much of a juggler, however. After the third or fourth toss the knife came down and cut his nose off as slick as you please, and he was rushed to a hospital. They are going to make him a nose of wax to replace the one he lost, but he will have to be very careful how he lets other folks pull it.

Modern France.

One must go through the provinces of France to find her men and understand the source of her past power. Those we meet with daily are a fine, manly-looking lot of fellows—bright eyes and erect, sturdy figures, nothing effeminate about them, in all ways superior to the men of the towns, who would seem to be descended from the old men and boys, all Napoleon left in the land in his world race for self glory.

Information Held Back.

There had been a fatal railroad accident and the reporter sought information. "See here," said the official testily, "you fellows must think we have accidents for your benefit." "Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me whose benefit you do have them for?" rejoined the reporter. But even touch at this point the official was reticent.

PLEA WAS WITHOUT AVAIL.

Lawyer's Impassioned Utterances Went All for Naught.

Odd bits of spontaneous humor frequently serve to relieve the solemnity and strain of trials in the courts. In a trial before Judge Kersten in the criminal court the other day counsel for the defendant recognizing that he had a desperate case, made a particularly strong appeal to the jury, says the Chicago Chronicle. His plea was of the emotional order, and the crowded court room was thrashed as the lawyer exalted his client and begged for the leniency of the jury.

In his closing oratorical flight the attorney, extending both arms toward his client, gazed fixedly at the jurors and impressively observed: "Gentlemen of the jury, in all the attributes of manhood in everything which goes to constitute good citizenship, my client is a stalwart. There he sits, a stalwart physically and mentally, a stalwart in integrity and probity."

Then the lawyer sat down. In the rear of the room sat a little man who had been deeply interested in the proceedings in court. As the judge was preparing to instruct the jury and silence was supreme, the little man leaned toward the occupant of a seat near him and in a shrill voice said: "I am a little hard of hearing, what kind of a war did he say the man on trial is?"

A wave of laughter floated over the court room, his honor smiled, while the bailiff gavelled for order. The defendant was convicted.

AND THE CAT CAME BACK.

Rose Superior to Little Matters Like Chloroform and Burial.

John Burroughs the famous nature student is never tired of ridiculing the new school of nature writers, the school that attributes a quite human intelligence to animals and insects.

"Mr. Burroughs dined with me one night," said a magazine editor of New York, "and among my guests was a young nature writer of the new school."

"This young man told a wonderful story about the intelligence of my stars." He said he was going to put the story in his new book. Mr. Burroughs gave a dry laugh and said:

"Let me tell you about a cat. This story is quite as authentic as the other one, and it should do for your book nicely."

"The student paused impressively, then said:

"A Springfield couple had a cat that age had rendered helpless and they put it out of its misery by means of chloroform. They buried it in the garden and planted a rosebush over its remains. The next morning a familiar scratching took them to the front door, and there was the cat waiting to be let in, with the rosebush under its arm."

The Lion's Mouth.

The use of a fountain is so common that it cannot be regarded as accidental. As a matter of fact, the custom like so many customs—not forgetting the fountain pen—came from Egypt, which adopted it because the annual inundation of the Nile takes place when the sun is in the constellation Leo—the lion. The allusion is too obvious to need pointing out. The oldest fixed date (424 B. C.) can be traced to Egypt, where the calendar was introduced in the middle of the forty-third century, and the history of modern ship-building began in Egypt, where it can be traced to about 3000 B. C. The most recent discoveries give to the land of Egypt a clean run of about 11,000 years without any admixture of foreign races. Egypt, land of hidden mysteries, great mother of science and art, what thinking mind has not dreamed of these?

John Brown's Safe.

Lovers of the antique would rejoice in the possession of a quaint old iron safe which was discovered in an out-of-the-way place in Springfield, Mass., not long ago. The safe was probably used by its original owner when he raised sheep and sold their wool. It is large enough to hold all the profits that Brown might have reaped in his wool business. The discovery has been made by Col. John L. Rice of Springfield, Mass. Instead of keeping his prize, however, Col. Rice has turned the curious old article over to the Connecticut Valley Historical society. The safe must have contained many interesting documents during its sojourn under Brown's roof, and it would be interesting to get hold of some of them.

Cross Purposes.

Marshall Wilder tells of an elderly lady in Cohoes, who, besides her deafness, experienced much trouble with false teeth. Consequently, she was disposed to regard the world as a vale of tears. A neighbor, passing her house one day, beheld the lady sitting at the window, wearing an expression of more than usual gloom. Thinking to cheer the unfortunate one, the good-hearted neighbor screamed at the top of her voice: "Good-morning, Mrs. Blank. Fine weather we're having." "Yes," replied the elderly lady, "but I can't eat with 'em yet."

Chewing Gum Habit Spreads.

Only in America is chewing gum made. Until quite recently it was consumed principally in this country, too, but now other countries are waking up. For instance, a Glasgow dispatch recently stated that, whereas a few years ago Scotland was free from the chewing gum habit, now a large part of the population chews gum.