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Some Queer Things in China.

We know that in a general way the Chinese are the most upsidedown people on the face of the earth, but the actual state of things among them is often very comical. How would it seem to us, for instance, if we were calling upon a Chinaman, and he should say to us very earnestly when we showed signs of leaving, "Do be so good as to stay and dine with me," to be told by the friend who whisked us off suddenly for fear that we should stay that this was a broad hint for us to go! That if Mr. Moen Fun had really desired the pleasure of our society at dinner, little tables would have been brought in and the meal set forth without the slightest allusion to it. The stranger soon learns to run almost for his life when he receives an invitation of this kind in the house where he is paying a visit.

Rich Chinamen do not pay their servants any wages, and are overwhelmed with applicants who are frantic to serve them; while common householders have to pay a very high price, and even then can scarcely get their work done. They know, you see, that in this case the bird in the bush is worth six in the hand, for the rich man has plenty of rich visitors from whom fees are always expected and given, while the ordinary personage does not suggest anything of the kind. Things are carefully mapped out in China.

But the most comical of all customs is the Chinaman's revenge upon an enemy. If a man has injured him, or he fancies that he has, knowing that justice is lame and blind, he takes the case into his own hands in a sweeping manner. But he does not do anything to the man or to any one belonging to him—he merely goes and hangs himself on his neighbor's door. For this is sure not only to kill the one whom he hates, but to put the life of every member of the family in danger—for fear of not punishing the right one. Chinese law is so particular about this that it insists upon killing a hundred innocent people rather than to run the risk of letting one criminal escape.

But we do not exactly see what fun the angry man gets out of hanging himself, as he is not there to enjoy the consequences—which does not seem to occur to him.

A very good custom in China is that of paying off all debts at the end of each year, so that the new year may be begun clear of debt. A better custom is not to get into debt, but this cannot always be avoided.

The Chinese seem to be more generally careful about money matters than we are in this country. It is said that there has not been a bank failure in China for nine hundred years. During the reign of the Emperor Hi Flang an edict was issued that upon the failure of a bank the heads of the president, cashier, and directors should be struck off and piled up in a corner with the assets. This edict has never been repealed, and Chinese bank stock has continued to be above par and above reproach.

That is a very severe law. If it existed in this land and were enforced there would be a good many large piles of heads lying around in some of our cities. But perhaps the existence of the law would save the banks and the heads of the bankers.

Failure and Success.

More than ninety per cent. of the men who go into business fail. This statement, while true, is misleading, because it seems to indicate that the men who are in business are the remaining ten per cent. This is not the case, for the reason that almost all of the successful business men whom you may know have been, earlier in their careers, numbered among the more than ninety per cent. of failures. Young men are apt to be overconfident. They either think too highly of their own powers, or else they underestimate the difficulties which they presume to overcome. Hence they go into business without due preparation—and fail.

The successful men are, as a rule, those who were big-brained enough to gather useful lessons from their experiences, but especially were they plucky and self-confident enough to try again.

The founder of the Baltimore Sun, who died worth $20,000,000, was unable to make his first venture pay, and Chas. A. Dana, the principal owner of the New York Sun, would probably now be a Chicago journalist instead of a famous New York one had his Chicago venture not proved a failure.

The late Dr. Agnew, whose reputation as a surgeon was as wide as the world, and of whom you may have heard in connection with the illness of President Garfield, whose physician he was, tried the iron business, and failed so badly that for years his income as a surgeon went to pay his debts. Men, as well as boys and girls, have to "try, try again."

A Cat Story.

Cats are not generally noted for their brightnesss, but the following incident is in their favor. The tale comes from Martinsville, Ind., and tells of Joseph Connett being attracted by the cries of two kittens that had fallen into a well. He lowered a cord and one of the cats, taking hold, was hauled to the surface. Before rescuing the other kitten he was called away, and, upon returning, saw the rescued kitten lower the string to its comrade in the well, and the latter, by means of it, quickly climbed to the top

Habits of the Secretary Bird.

As soon as the secretary bird, or snake eater (Gypogeranus serpentarius), of South Africa, discovers a snake, it advances toward it, without hurry and without hesitation, and when within striking distance it immediately elevates its crest and the feathers of the neck, and, without losing any time, delivers a blow with its foot. If the snake has avoided the blow and attempts to strike in return, the bird interposes a wing, thus receiving the deadly fangs harmlessly upon the long feathers, and immediately strikes again.

The fight is then virtually over, for if the secretary gets in a single blow the snake's back is broken, and the bird, like lightning, plants its foot firmly on the reptile's neck and head, pressing them into the ground, while it delivers the coup de grace with its beak, and then deliberately swallows the snake whole, beginning at the tail, and, just before the head disappears, giving it a parting rap on the ground.

But there is nothing refined about the secretary bird's appetite, for one writer says he found inside one three serpents "as long as his arm," eleven lizards seven inches long, twenty-one tortoises two inches in diameter, "besides a large quantity of grasshoppers and other insects;" or, in other words, seven and a half feet of snake, six and a half of lizard, three and a half of tortoise, and, say, a yard of miscellaneous trifles!

The secretary bird is protected by the Cape authorities for the immense public benefit it confers in eating poisonous snakes, and a penalty is attached by law to its destruction. And, if it were necessary, hundreds of eyewitnesses could be called to prove its right to the title of "Serpentarius." Curiously enough, too, this bird can be trained and is trained, to protect poultry yards, not only from snakes, which are all too fond of eggs, but from other birds of prey.—St. James's Budget.

An Uncertain Groom.

Many characteristics of the Scotch are amusingly displayed in a series of stories published in Edinburgh some years ago under the title of "Scotch Folk."

"Have you brought any witnesses?" asked the Rev. Mr. Wood, of Bathgate, of a middle-aged couple who had come to be married.

"No, we ne'er thocht o' that. Is it necessary?"

"Oh, certainly," said the minister, "you should have a groomsman and bridesmaid as witnesses."

"Wha can we get, Jen do ye think?"

The bride, thus addressed, suggested a female cousin whom the bridegroom had never seen, and, after consultation a man also was thought of.

"Step ye awa' alang, Jen, an' ask them, an' I'll walk about till ye come back."

Jen set out as desired, and after some time returned with the two friends, the cousin being a blooming lass considerably younger than the bride.

When the parties had been properly arranged and the minister was about to proceed with the ceremony, the bridegroom suddenly said:

"Wad ye bide a wee, sir?"

"What is it now?" asked the minister.

"Weel, I was just gaun to say that if it wad be the same to you, I wad rather hae that ane," pointing to the bridesmaid.

"That's a most extraordinary statement to make at this stage!" exclaimed the minister, "I'm afraid it's too late to talk of such a thing now."

"Is it?" asked the bridegroom, in a tone of resignation to the inevitable. "Weel, then, ye maun just hang on."

It is not recorded that there was any feeling of elation on the part of the bridesmaid, or of jealousy on the part of the bride, and the ceremony proceeded.

Salute the School Teacher.

An exchange shouts out; "Lift your hat reverently when you pass the teacher of the primary school. She is the guardian angel of the republic. She takes the bantling fresh from the home nest, full of pouts and passions, an ungovernable little wretch whose own mother honestly admits that she sends him to school to get rid of him. The lady who knows her business takes a whole car load of these anarchists, one of whom single handed and alone is more than a match for his parents, and at once puts them in a way of being useful and upright citizens. At what expense of toil, patience and soul weariness! Lift your hat to her."

Mother.

More and more as we grow we appreciate the finer traits that are in human nature. Men going out into life never forget the mother who stays at home, and who has presented to them a nature with a reason dominant, with a high moral sense, with refined and sweet affections, with taste, with patience, with gentleness, with self-sacrifice and with disinterestedness. A man may go through all the world, he may run through every stage of belief and disbelief, but there will be one picture that he cannot efface. Living or dying, there will rise up before him like a morning star the beauty of that remembered goodness which he called "mother."

Chinese Ingenuity.

Chinese ingenuity seems equal to every emergency. A man-of-war attacked a Chinese junk engaged in illegal traffic and was eager to capture the crew alive. The sailors on the junk threw overboard thousands of cocoanuts and then leaped among them. The man of-war's men could not distinguish heads from cocoanuts, and nearly all the Chinamen escaped.

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