

DREW ON SIGHT.

Buckskin Joe of cowboy fame
Once from a creditor heard,
Who wrote a line about the bill
And of payment long deferred.

The cowboy plucked him when they met
And snuffed his earthly light,
For on the letter he had read,
"I'll draw on you at sight."
—Atlanta Journal.

ROADS OF SOUTHERN CHINA.

Below the Yang-tze-Kiang a wheeled vehicle is out of place.

As might be expected, the roads in southern China are not remarkable for their excellence. In a town the street is seldom wider than from 5 to 15 feet. Between great cities there runs what is called a "great road," kept in moderate repair and sometimes exceeding 8 feet in width. Half a day's journey from Amoy lies the "great road" that runs almost straight from Peking to Canton. The peculiarity of it consists in no consecutive 30 yards being of the same description. One part is composed of loose shingle, another is paved; here it mounts on the top of a mudbank, there it descends into a narrow ditch. The farmer plows up the highway to increase the size of his field, or he will take it into his head to construct a pond for irrigation purposes where the road used to be.

South of the Yang-tze-Kiang a wheeled vehicle is out of place. In the north the roads are better, and among a variety of methods of traveling the wheelbarrow plays a great part as a means of locomotion. The labor of propulsion is assisted by hoisting a sail when the wind is favorable, and on ordinary occasions by attaching a mule in front. There is no more ludicrous sight than that of a pompous Chinese gentleman bumping along, his round cheeks quivering like a jelly, while a perspiring coolie pushes the shafts behind and endeavors to keep the burrow balanced. The springless one-horse cart, which has to encounter roads of the roughest kind, makes no provision for bodily comfort. It is stated on good authority that the servant of a British ambassador actually got concussion of the brain from lying down when ill in the body of a cart of this kind. The writer had a somewhat similar experience when riding on a mail cart over a corduroy road in British Columbia. Being sleepy, he left the spring seat, fixed in front and holding three persons, and lay down behind. It was impossible to stay there long. Bumping over the round tree trunks of considerable diameter, which formed the pavement, the hard wooden cart seemed to rise up and smite every portion of his body. A rougher system of making a road can scarcely be imagined.

Not less remarkable than the wheelbarrow was the method employed in Nepal in the time of Tavernier, the traveler, and prevailing in some out of the way places still, of carrying passengers up and down mountain tracks. The women of the country offer themselves as porters. On their shoulders they wear a strap, to which a large cushion is attached, where the traveler seats himself. It takes three women, relieving one another from time to time, to carry a man in this rough district.—London Standard.

THE TOSPY OF PLANTS.

Truffles Grow Without Roots in the Viscerality of Oak Trees.

Concerning truffles there is much mystery. Where do they come from? "I suspect they growed," Topsy might have said of them, but nobody knows exactly how they do grow. They have not any root, and no one can tell where they will be found, except that experience has taught that, as a rule, they are most plentiful in the vicinity of oak trees. There in the ground, a few inches below the surface, lie these corrugated balls, emitting an odor which is rather sickly and overpowering. Pigs and dogs have a great affinity for this scent, and formerly pigs were used to direct the seekers after truffles to their place of concealment. Dogs in these times are solely employed in Perigord, whence we derive the bulk of our supplies. Some are to be found in England, in Hampshire, but these are described as having a musty taste and are without the rich and delicate flavor which makes the French truffle dear to the heart of the chef.

To indulge one's appetite for truffles after the taste for them has been acquired is a very expensive luxury. They require to be well selected. Some may be as small as a nut, and some may weigh fully a pound, but the best ones, says M. Benoist, who has specially studied them, average six or eight to a pound. In this country the consumption is not so large, but it suddenly expands at Christmas time, and it is possible that when the supply is short, as it sometimes is, pickled truffles may be worth 30 shillings per pound. As truffles soon waste and go bad, it is obvious that it is a speculative article, unless the demand is regular. The French have learned to appreciate these delicacies very highly, and the skilled cook can in formidable dishes make effective use of them, to the delight of the gourmet, if not of the gourmand or glutton. In Paris more truffles are used in one day than would suffice the needs of all England for two months, served though they be as vegetables with hot or cold dishes.—London Telegraph.

What Stevenson Did.

Appropos of the death of Robert Louis Stevenson, "H." wrote this to the London Times: "Seven years ago I lay ill in San Francisco, an obscure journalist, quite friendless. Stevenson, who knew me slightly, came to my bedside and said: 'I suppose you are like all of us—you don't keep your money. Now, if a little loan, as between one man of letters and another—eh?' This to a lad writing rubbish for a vulgar sheet in California!"

A Dairymaid's Dress.

The dairymaid's dress at Ebling, in Germany, where girls are employed in dairy farming, consists of a short blouse girded at the waist, knee breeches and leather hose, with neat shoes. The costume is described as quite picturesque.

THE DONKEY.

A Tearful Plea For the Down-trodden but Obstinate Animal.

Civilization has used the poor ass badly. Our ways are not his ways, and he not infrequently reminds us of the fact. When he does express dissent, he shows himself an uncompromising bigot. Yet let us consider for a moment why he is "such an ass." He has been taken from a bold and free life in the uplands, where the very air tastes of independence, and has been degraded to the very lowest kinds of drudgery. Nonconformist as he is, he is more of a Tory than the horse. He cannot fit himself to changed circumstances. He is like the free Caribs, whom the Spaniards tried to reduce to slavery. The condition is so foreign to his nature that he cannot fall in with it without losing all the nobler traits of his old self. It crushes him. He is proverbially patient, but his patience has in it something of the dullness of despair. Yet obstinate and rebellious as he occasionally is, he cannot be considered a fool. If he appears to be one, it is because we have removed him so far out of his natural sphere. If any of us were taken from our civilized surroundings and were turned loose to get a living among the desolate rocks of Abyssinia, we should doubtless offer as fair a laughing stock to the wild asses and baboons.

Now, where does the donkey get his obstinacy from? It is a useful quality in the right place. On a long journey, with short allowance of food and water, a mule will keep going longer than a horse. It seems to me likely that the great difference in character between the horse and the ass is partly owing to the fact that when wild the former go in large herds and the latter in small. The horse is much more of a society animal than the donkey, and so his manners are more suave. He, like all those who have to mix freely with their fellows, has acquired an accommodating disposition. Let me make haste to say that a donkey is distinctly a more intelligent animal than a horse. It is his unwillingness to fall in with the wishes of those who would influence him and his stubbornness in sticking to his own views to which I am alluding. In his mountain home, where pasture is scarce, only a few wild asses, as a rule, go together. Should a foe suddenly appear when they are scattered in search of the scanty herbage each must decide on a course for himself, for it would not always be possible to follow a leader. Hence self-reliance and a disposition to act independently would be valuable in the struggle for existence.—North American Review.

Ingenuous Use of Photography.

Before the days of books parchments became so costly that economical scholars erased more or less perfectly what had been written and used them a second time. In this manner some highly interesting and valuable manuscripts have been lost to the world. But in many cases the ancient characters are still faintly visible.

Twice used parchments are called palimpsests, and many modern scholars have strained their eyes in the effort to decipher the original writing.

Recently photography has been successfully applied in Germany for this work. The color of the faded ink of the older writing on a palimpsest is yellow. A photograph of such a manuscript was made through a yellow screen. The result was a negative on which the old writing was barely discernible, being a little darker than the background, while the later black writing appeared distinctly as white letters.

Next an ordinary negative on a bromide plate was made, and from this was produced a transparent positive on which both writings appeared dark and about equally distinct. Then the transparency was superimposed on the first negative, so that the dark letters of the later writing covered the light letters, representing the same writing in the negative. They were thus eliminated, being indistinguishably merged with the general dark background produced by the combination of positive and negative. But the earlier characters, since they were dark in both cases, appeared in the combination intensely black and distinct.—Youth's Companion.

"Steal Not This Book."

Students of sociology who are fond of tracing back the customs of latter day man to the practices of his remote ancestry will note with interest the fact that there is authority at least 600 years old for the entry, "Steal not this book for fear of shame," by which schoolboys proclaim their ownership of a work.

In a curious volume in the Bodleian library, cited by a contributor to the last issue of The Ex-Libris Journal, formerly belonging to the monastery of Robertsbridge in Sussex, is the following inscription: "This book belongs to St. Mary of Robertsbridge. Whoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it, let him be anathema maranatha."

In the course of the fourteenth century the book came into the possession of John, bishop of Exeter, who seems to have been somewhat troubled by the inscription, as being likely to give rise to injurious suspicions with regard to himself. Accordingly he wrote underneath it under date 1327, "I, John, bishop of Exeter, know not where the aforesaid house is, nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way."—London Advertiser.

In a Japanese House.

There are no chairs in a Japanese house. Women sit on the floor to do everything from drinking tea and playing the four stringed guitar to dressing the hair before the fetching little round mirrors upon lacquer stands. So when sewing machines came in the question of how to sit and work them was a puzzling one indeed. But Mme. Yoshawar, says an eastern traveler, rose or fell to the occasion. All her house floors stood some 2½ feet from the ground, just the height at which she could conveniently sew upon the contrivance of the foreign devils. So a hole was cut in the floor big enough for the machine to drop through, and the worker could then sit upon the edge, making her little bare brown feet send the pedals flying as the machine rested on the earth below.—Philadelphia Press.

"WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?"

Web Flanagan's Own Story of How He Uttered the Famous Remark.

"Flanagan of Texas" is a name that always brings up a famous question, "What are we here for?" Whether in New York, Chicago or San Francisco, that name on the hotel register always brings a crowd of people to see the man who originated one of the most famous phrases in American politics. The sentence has gone into history and become a part of it. It was one of the memorable incidents of one of the most memorable conventions that ever assembled in America—the Chicago national Republican convention which defeated Grant and nominated Garfield. Ever since then somebody in every convention, large or small, has arisen to ask, "What are we here for?" Web Flanagan of Henderson, Rusk county, Tex., is the man who said it first of all. To a writer for the Galveston News Flanagan told the story of the phrase. This is the way he told it:

"It was in Chicago in 1880. I was a member from Texas in the national convention. When the committee on platform and resolutions reported, Barker of Massachusetts offered to insert a plank pledging the party to civil service reform. I arose in my place and said: 'Mr. President, Texas has had quite enough of civil service reform. Out of 1,300 offices in that state 1,000 of them are filled by Democrats. We believe that to the victors belong the spoils. Every proposition of this sort comes from states that are threatened with a Mugwump invasion. Six, the boys in the trenches are demanding recognition. Party service entitles them to something at the party's hands. They need the offices, and, sir, what are we here for but for the offices?' Immediately the delegates and the galleries yelled. They shouted till they were hoarse, and it was several minutes before the chairman was finally able to restore order. The next day the incident was in all of the papers, and from then till now it has been traveling around the earth. I have seen it in foreign papers and have heard it time and again in national conventions since then. It was simply a forcible way I had of expressing myself. I never had the slightest idea that my chief claim to fame should be a chance expression in the confusion of a great national body."

EDWIN BOOTH'S UNHAPPINESS.

To His Daughter He Says He Was Never Really Happy.

A number of letters written by Edwin Booth to his daughter and intimate friends are published in The Century. The following one to his daughter gives an index to the melancholy that was so marked in his disposition:

New York, Jan. 5, 1888.

I have seen these several times and shall say goodly tomorrow. I do all I can for her, but nothing on earth can render her lonely life less weary, poor soul! As for God's reward for what I have done, I can hardly appreciate it. "Is more like punishment for misdeeds (of which I've done many) than grace for good ones (if I've done any). Homelessness is the actor's fate, physical incapacity to attain what is most desired and desired by such a spirit as I am slave to. If there be rewards, I certainly am well paid, but hard schooling in life's thoughtless lessons has made me somewhat of a philosopher, and I've learned to take the buffets and rewards of fortune with equal thanks, and in suffering all to suffer—I won't say nothing, but comparatively little. Dick Stebbins wrote a poem called 'The King's Bell,' which fits my case exactly (you may have read it). He dedicated it to Lorimer Graham, who never knew an unhappy day in his brief life, instead of to me, who never knew a really happy one. You mustn't suppose from this that I'm ill in mind or body. On the contrary, I'm well enough in both. No man is a pessimist. I merely wanted you to know that the wear of my life is bitter-sweet—perhaps not more so than every man's whose experience has been above and below the surface. Business has continued large and increases a little every night. The play will run two weeks longer. Sunday at 4 o'clock I start for Baltimore, arriving there at 10 o'clock.

Tomorrow a meeting of actors, managers and artists at breakfast to discuss and organize, if possible, a theatrical club like the Garrick of London.

Practical Chemistry.

Once, when lecturing to his class, a certain learned professor thus delivered himself:

"I would have you observe, gentlemen, that coal, when exposed to the action of the air, loses 10 per cent of its weight and heating properties. This arises through the influence of the alkaline constituents of the—"

"But, sir, how is it when a dog lies near the coals?" interrupted one of his hearers.

"Young gentleman, this is neither the time nor the place to crack these small jokes of yours," severely retorted the professor.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but that is exactly what my father thought and said when he found it necessary to leave the stock of coal for a few nights in the open air, and it was discovered that it had diminished to the alarming extent of over 70 per cent. He then consulted me, as a student of chemistry, as to what could be done to stay such loss, and I suggested that a savage dog should be procured and kept chained near the coals. He took my advice, and since then our coals have not lost so much as 2 per cent in an entire month."—London Tit-Bits.

Anything that adds to the neatness and beauty of the home and its belongings not only increases the owner's pleasure, but fosters refinement and real betterment of the household.

Two Unerring Signs of Returning Prosperity

The increase in the iron output of the United States and

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