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The Last Kiss.
 I put the half-written poem,
 While the pen idly trailed in my hand,
 Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
 But the little bare feet on the stairway,
 And the faint, methered laugh in the hall,
 And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,
 Cry up to me over it all.
 So I gathered it up—where was broken
 The tear-faded thread of my theme,
 Telling how, as one night I sat writing,
 A fairy broke in on my dream—
 A little inquisitive fairy—
 My own little girl, with the gold
 Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy
 Blue eyes of the fairies of old.
 'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—
 "For was it a moment like this,"
 I said, "when she knew I was busy,
 To come romping in for a kiss?"
 Come rowdying up from her mother
 And clambering there at my knee
 For one 'ittle kiss for my dollie
 And one 'ittle uzer for me!"

God pity the heart that repelled her
 And the cold hand that turned her away!
 And from the lips that denied her
 This answerless prayer of to-day:
 Take, Lord, from my memory forever
 That pitiful sob of despair;
 And the patter and trip of the bare little feet
 And the one piercing cry on the stair!

I put by the half-written poem,
 While the pen idly trailed in my hand,
 Who'd read it or who'd understand?"
 But the little bare feet on the stairway,
 And the faint, methered laugh in the hall,
 And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,
 Cry up to me over it all.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

THE ROGUES OF INDIA.

Many wonderful things have been written about the jugglers of India, but things still more wonderful could be written about the thieves. I have lived in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and Rangoon, and have been knowing to some operations of these gentry which seemed incredible.

Every foreigner is considered fair game by the natives. While there are plenty who will not rob him by force, there is none who will not swindle him if it can be done. On three different occasions, in different hotels, I sent out by waiters to make purchases or get money changed. In each instance they ran away, although in no case was the sum over a dollar, and in every case the native left lucrative employment in order to beat me. It couldn't have been the idea of gain so much as the idea of getting ahead of a foreigner. While there is no positive security from thieves in India, there is partial security in hiring a chowkadar. This fellow is a thief from away back. He is known to be, and he is employed on this account. If you pay him so that he can afford to be honest, he will keep other thieves away. It is a point of honor with the fraternity not to steal from any one employing a chowkadar. His services are a species of blackmail, but you must either pay him or be at the mercy of the slickest, shiest set of rascals on earth.

At Bombay I had a bungalow with an English artillery Captain on leave of absence. As he had with him two servants whom he felt he could trust, we determined not to employ a chowkadar. Several called to offer their services, and all seemed greatly surprised and annoyed when sent off. One of the fellows was an old man with a foxy look, and he protested to the Captain.

"I am a great thief, but too sharp for the officers, who have never yet laid hands on me. I know all the thieves, and if I am with you no one will dare steal from you."

"And if we do not employ you?"

"You will surely be robbed."

"Well, we shall try to get along without you, and if thieves come, some one may get killed."

The old man went away with a look of cunning on his face, and we had no doubt that he would be among the first to seek to lay hands on our goods. There were but three rooms to our bungalow—a parlor, kitchen, and bedroom. The Captain and myself occupied the parlor as a sitting room, dining room and bedroom, while the cook and his fellow servant occupied the other two. We kept but little money by us and had but few goods. The Captain was experimenting a little with a new explosive, and I was making a report to the home Government on the various vegetable poisons of that peninsula. We therefore had plenty of leisure to plan for our protection and watch all suscepts.

On the second day after the sly old man was sent away, a lame native woman, leading a boy about 4 years of age, sent in word by the servant that she wanted to see the Captain on important business. The pair were admitted, and she began making inquiries about her husband, who she said was a member of the Captain's command. She gave the name of a native known to the officer, and asked so many questions that she took up fifteen minutes' time. I was not much interested in her story, but was in the actions of the child. No sooner did she let go of his hand than he began running about to inspect things. We saw afterward how hard she tried to draw all our attention to herself. The Captain paid no heed to the child; but presently, as I

watched, I saw the little shaver grab something from a stand.

He then returned to his mother and took her hand. After a moment I remembered that my field glasses rested on the stand, and as I rose up to look for them they were not to be seen. I went over to the child, and notwithstanding the fact that he shrank away and began to cry, as if scared at me, I picked him up and gave him a shake. The glasses fell to the floor from the folds of a cloth about his waist, and with them three spoons which he had stolen in the kitchen. He ran away as I put him down, and the woman hurried after him. It was a put-up job to pilfer from us, and, while the child did not look more than four years of age, we afterward learned that he was over ten.

India everybody sleeps during the middle of the day. That is, everybody should. About a week after the occurrence related above, the Captain climbed into a hammock under the veranda about 11 o'clock one forenoon for a nap. I should have climbed into another, but I had some letters to get off that day, and I removed coat and vest and sat down to a table in a corner of our room. The window before me was up, and a light bamboo shade was down to keep the sun out. The captain had had plenty of time to go to sleep when I happened to look out through the slats of the blind. While I saw nothing, I felt that something was wrong, and I softly rose up and went to the door opening out on the veranda. This door was, of course, wide open. My feet were in slippers, and I made not the least noise as I reached the door. The veranda was about 20 feet long, and the Captain's hammock was swung at the centre. I peered cautiously out, and I saw the figure of the sly old man right under the hammock. His back was towards me, but I determined to see what he would do, and then capture him if I could. As I looked he slowly rose up on the Captain's left, cocked his ears to listen, and then his deaf fingers began a search of the sleeping man's pockets. I braced myself, took a full breath, and was on him at a bound. I seized him firmly by the body, but he sank down, wriggled two or three times, and next minute he was gone, upsetting me by grasping my feet, and hastening away as he went. It did not seem that he had been at work over ten seconds when I grabbed him, and yet in that time he had extricated the Captain's watch and wallet, and several other articles. All were left behind, but the thief had disappeared like a shadow.

Perhaps the best way would have been to give in and employ a chowkadar but we were both determined not to be bulldozed into it. All portable articles not in hourly use were put into a strong wooden chest and kept under lock and key and both of us were on the watch for any new movement. A couple of weeks had passed and we were beginning to feel safe, when the fellows attempted a bold game. A juggler came to the veranda and began to perform and we both went out. While the room was left alone, the thieves—there were three of them—came through the garden alongside the house and cut a hole through the side exactly back of the chest. The captain happened to look in just as the box was being moved and with a couple of bounds he crossed the room and seized one of the handles. I could not realize the situation until the thieves had pulled the chest half way out, and by the time I had got around the bungalow they had disappeared. How they could have located the chest so exactly was a mystery to us, as it had been moved several feet only the night before. They cut either to the right nor the left, but exactly back of it, and the space was only an inch wider than the chest.

The next move created a sensation in Bombay. Opposite our bungalow, which was on a side street, was one belonging to a native—a known thief. The fraternity had somehow got the idea that we had a great pile of money hidden in our bungalow, and that the Captain was making gold nuggets by the wholesale. He was, as I said, experimenting with a new explosive, and this probably started the idea. The explosive was either dynamite or something very near it. One day, after the Captain had been fusing around in the front yard for half an hour, and while he was reading on the veranda, there was a terrible explosion. It seemed as if our house was lifted a foot high, and everything inside was thrown into confusion as it settled back. It was an explosion which was felt for half a mile around, and when we got out doors we found a hole in our front yard into which a couple of bullocks could have been dumped. That wasn't all, however. A big ditch had been opened straight across the street to the other bungalow, and the bruised and battered bodies of three natives were thrown out within thirty feet of the big hole. It took us some little time to figure out what had occurred. The sly old man and his pals had dug a tunnel from the native bungalow to within three feet of ours. It was intended to pass under

the house and break ground inside, there being no floors in our place. The explosion, which took place in an iron kettle, was almost over the tunnel, and the force was mainly downward. The concussion followed along the ditch and blew the roof off the native bungalow. The thieves were either creeping forward or backward in the tunnel, and death came to them so quickly that they never knew what hurt them.

Next morning a native priest, accompanied by a scribe, called upon us to secure our account of the affair. The Captain had explained matters to the authorities, and there had been no inquest. The priest said that the sly old man had been one of his most devoted followers, and as he was a person of considerable importance in Nagpoor, where he had many relatives, an account of his death was to be published in the native language. The visit was made us at an early hour in the morning, while everything was lying around loose, and the two men had scarcely left the house when we missed the field glasses, a pocket compass, a pair of shoes, and a few or three other articles. A native detective assured us that the priest and scribe were two notorious thieves, who would peach on the gang, the four plunged their knives into him and ran away. By the time the Captain got home the man was dead.—[New York Sun.]

The Use of Water at Meals.
 Opinions differ as to the effect of the free ingestion of water at meal times, but the view most generally received is probably that it dilutes the gastric juice and so retards digestion. Apart from the fact that a moderate delay in the process is by no means a disadvantage, as Sir William Roberts has shown in his explanation of the popularity of tea and coffee, it is more than doubtful whether any such effect is in reality produced. When ingested during meals, water may do good by washing out the digested food and by exposing the undigested part more thoroughly to the action of the digestive ferments. Pepsin is a catalytic body, and a given quantity will work almost indefinitely provided the peptones are removed as they are formed. Good effects of water, drunk freely before meals, has, however, another beneficial result—it washes away the mucus which is secreted by the mucous membrane during the intervals of repose, and favors peristalsis of the whole alimentary tract. The membrane thus cleansed is in a much better condition to receive food and convert it into soluble compounds. The accumulation of mucus is specially well marked in the morning, when the gastric walls are covered with a thick, tenacious layer. Food entering the stomach at this time will become covered with this tenacious coating, which for a time protects it from the action of the gastric ferments, and so retards digestion. The tubular contracted stomach, with its puckered mucous lining and viscid contents, a normal condition in the morning before breakfast, is not suitable to receive food. Exercise before partaking of a meal stimulates the circulation of the blood and facilitates the flow of blood through the vessels. A glass of water washes out the mucus, partially distends the stomach, wakes up peristalsis, and prepares the alimentary canal for the morning meal. Observation has shown that non-irritating liquids pass directly through the "tubular" stomach, and even if food be present they only mix with it to a slight extent. According to Dr. Leuf, who has made this subject a special study, cold water should be given to persons who have sufficient vitality to react and hot water to others. In chronic gastric catarrh it is extremely beneficial to drink warm or hot water before meals, and salt is said in most cases to add to the good effect produced.—[British Medical Journal.]

It was nearly a week before anything unusual occurred. A bell had been fixed in the housekeeper's room, with a cord running to the head of my bed, and it was arranged that when I gave a certain signal she was to run to the kitchen and send a native after the Captain, providing he was not at home. That signal would mean game in the trap. If any one came at night, all the people would be at home, and could do as directed by the Captain. I could not leave my room, and must certainly be a good sentinel if awake. If asleep, any noise out of routine would arouse me. The Captain did not come home, after leaving in the morning, until 1 o'clock. We had begun to despair of luck in trapping a thief, when, one morning about 10 o'clock, just after I had opened my eyes from a nap lasting half an hour, I saw the head of a native as he peered from behind the summer house. It was a thief spying out the land. I got hold of the bell cord, but waited to see what the fellow would do. In two or three minutes he stepped out in full sight, and I was quite sure he was the same who came before. He came boldly up the path, as if bent on an errand, and walked directly over the trap. I was so astonished that I forgot to ring until he had turned into the stable.

The housekeeper had gone to the kitchen and was wrangling with the cook, and so my signal was unheard. The fellow was out of my sight seven or eight minutes, and when he reappeared he had a sack of horse feed on his shoulders. He had caught the stable men napping again. I rang and rang, but no one came. He went down the same steps back over and seeming to glide,

but as he reached the trap the dirt and leaves flew in a shower, and next instant I saw that he was fast in the jaws. He pitched forward, and I could see his right ankle was held in the vice. He quickly scrambled up, however, looked sharply around him, and then uttered a low whistle. Inside of thirty seconds four natives came from the thicket to assist him. The trap puzzled them. If they had ever seen one before, they did not know how to manage the springs. The prisoner must have been in terrible agony, for the teeth went to the bone on each side of his leg; but he never brought a groan. While the five were consulting I rang again, and this time the housekeeper came and sent for the Captain. Long enough before he came the affair was ended. When the men found they could not liberate the prisoner, they designed to cut his leg off above the trap. He refused to agree, as it would doubtless have been the death of him. They had nothing with which to break the chain or lock, and, doubtless fearing that the prisoner would peach on the gang, the four plunged their knives into him and ran away. By the time the Captain got home the man was dead.—[New York Sun.]

When Sir Henry Parkes returned to Pekin he said he had come back to "dust, dirt and disdain;" and most travelers will find this sentence, sweeping though it may be, rather lacking in D's than otherwise. However much Pekin may be described, its condition would still remain inconceivable to those who have not seen it; all the filth thrown into the roadway—a mixture of mud and abominations, in the ruts in which the springless cart-wheels are forever sticking! You get along Curio street—supposed by some people to be the most beautiful in China—by walking along the little bits of crumpling ground in front of each shop, and then swinging yourself around the wooden pillar that supports the roof, so as to avoid getting soiled by the quagmire below. The shop fronts are of wondrous carved wood; highly gilded signs hang out into the street; wonderful beams with curved ends project across the roadway, and strings from which dangle red feathers. But the prices of the curios are exorbitant; that one can only be glad that Pekin shopkeepers bow and smile as politely on non-buyers as on customers. Indeed, it is customary for them to send their wares on inspection to the different houses day after day. "Number one thing six dollars," say they. Reply unwarily with "Half a dollar," and it is yours; whereupon you feel sure at once the thing is no real curio at all and worth nothing. This bargaining is a great amusement each day after breakfast. Pekin furs are lovely, and there are lovely white feather-like Tibetan sheepskins, red-backed Mongolian squirrel-skins, and, most fascinating of all, cinnamon or cream-colored fox skins, so soft that they could almost be passed through the traditional ring.

The great sights of Pekin are behind closed gates at present. Sometimes one is open; others never. We go to the clock tower; a wattle fence is hurriedly erected across the opening as we approach. We go to the examination hall—sometimes open, but shut today. Of course you can go again, if you liked the smells last time. It is adjoining the observatory; where the carved bronze supports of the instruments—wieldy dragons chained to mountains lest they should escape, redundant foliage, etc.—deserve to be one of the wonders of the world. I am glad to have seen them; I should like to see them again. But, oh dear! the smells! and the man with loathsome sores and the hideous voice, who wants to try gentlemen's cigars for them and to touch ladies' dresses, who fights with strangers for a larger tip when he has more than enough already. That man is of a piece with Pekin.

The outside of the emperor's palace is all that any European has ever seen of it since the days of Marco Polo—is ideal, a fairy palace. High walls shut in the forbidden city; a moat surrounds them; and then there are the glistening yellow tiles, the roofs built by the old Mongols in imitation of their tents. Then there is the green hill with its trees, and palace roofs climbing up it. The entrances are of deep blue, bright green, golden dragoned, with here and there a touch of vermillion. The sky is blue above, the sun shines, and there in the roadway sits a child stark naked, its face so dirty that it is impossible to see what it is like, its head misshapen with disease. No wonder the present emperor never cares to come outside, and is supposed never to have done so. The world inside must be far more delightful, if it matches with those glittering fairy roofs.—[St. James Budget.]

A Watch Without Hands.
 The watch without hands which has recently been brought before the public is simply a watch with ordinary wheel-work in which the intermediate teeth are wanting and which gear every minute and hour only. The contrivance, though admitted to possess some inconveniences, is on the other hand claimed to present some genuine preference over the ordinary make. Thus, the construction not only allows the reading to be accurate, but also permits of estimating the time that separates each passing minute. There is not only an optical signal given, but also an acoustic one, since at every change of figure the ear perceives a slight sound, and consequently it becomes useless for one to examine his watch in order to measure a given interval of time—a feature of special value to engineers, physicians, officers, travelers and observers. The experimenter knows exactly when a minute begins and ends.—[New York Sun.]

Fashion Put Up the Price.
 Turquoise is the rage this season, and jewelers who had seen stocks of these gems run down to prices almost nominal blessed fashion when it set its seal of approval on these pretty bits of blue. A year or two ago little turquoise could be bought as low as \$1. To-day the same stones are worth from \$12 to \$15. So says a well-known Boston jeweler.

PEKIN.

A Vivid Pen Picture of the Great Chinese City.

Its Dirty Streets, Queer Shows, and Emperor's Palace.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

Make Me a Song.

Out of the silence make me a song,
 Beautiful, sad and soft and low;
 Let the loveliest music sound along
 And wing each note with wail of woe.
 Dim and drear;
 Out of the silence make me a hymn
 Whose sounds are shadows soft and dim.
 Out of the stillness in your heart—
 A thousand songs are sleeping there—
 Make me but one, thou child of art,
 The song of a hope in a last despair,
 Dark and low;

A chant of woes;

Out of the stillness, tone by tone,
 Soft as a snowflake, wild as a moan.

Out of the dark recesses flash me a song,
 Brightly dark and darkly bright;

Let it sweep as a love-star sweeps along

The mystical shadows of the night,

Sing it sweet,

Where nothing is drear, or dark, or dim,
 And earth songs melt into heaven's hymn.

—[Father Ryan.]

HUMOROUS.

Needs signal ability—Man at railway crossing.

Impressions of America—Footprints in the snow.

Wisely improving the present—Selling a duplicate gift.

It takes a great deal of pluck to get the feathers off a live goose.

1888 is but little over a fraction of time, anyhow—one and three eights.

"Give me a dud egg, please," said the boarder. "A dud egg? What is that?" "A fresh one."

The frequent changes in the Cabinets of Europe lead one to believe that the Ministers are Methodists.

A physician says: "If a child does not thrive on fresh milk, boil it." This is too severe. Why not whip it?

It has been averred that a lady with a diamond ring will scratch her nose in a given period four times as often as other women.

He (at a very late hour, with deep tenderness)—How can I leave thee? She—Really, Mr. Stayer, I can't tell you. I wish to heaven I could.

A young lady recently presented her lover with an elaborately constructed penwiper, and was astonished the following Sunday to see him come into church wearing it as a cravat.

Two young writers were talking of their hopes, their ambitions. "If I have not made a reputation by the time I'm thirty I shall blow my brains out," asserted one. "My dear boy," replied the other, "you are as good as dead."

The most novel complaint of impure milk reported is that of a London boy, boarded out under the poor-law regulation, who reported that the milk given him out of town, instead of being taken out of clean tins, had been squeezed out of a nasty cow, and he "seed 'em a-doin' it."

A teacher noticing that upon an examination paper the Isthmus of Panama was every time spelled "Panamaugh," was curious to know the name of the author of such extraordinary spelling, and turning to the head of the previous page, found the child's name to be Katie Hummebaugh.

Skill of Ancient Builders.