

THE ROOF OF THE WORLD.

Marco Polo's Account of the Plateau of Pamir and its Inhabitants. In leaving Badkshan you ride 12 days between east and northeast, ascending the river that runs through land belonging to a brother of the Prince of Badkshan and containing a good many towns and villages and scattered habitations. The people are Mohammedans and valiant in war. At the end of those 12 days you come to a province of no great size, extending indeed no more than three days' journey in any direction, and this is called Vokhan. The people worship Mohammed and they have a peculiar language. They are gallant soldiers, and they have a chief whom they call none, which is as much as to say count, and they are liegemen to the Prince of Badkshan.

There are numbers of wild beasts of all sorts in this region. And when you leave this little country and ride three days northeast, always among mountains, you get to such a height that it is said to be the highest place in the world. And when you have got to this height you find a great lake between two mountains and out of it a fine river running through a plain clothed with the finest pasture in the world, inasmuch that a lean beast there will fatten to your heart's content in ten days. There are great numbers of all kinds of wild beasts, among others wild sheep of great size, whose horns are a good six palms in length. From these horns the shepherds make great bowls to eat from, and they use the horns also to inclose fields for their cattle at night.

Messer Marco was told also that the wolves were numerous and killed many of those wild sheep. Hence quantities of their horns and bones were found, and these were made into great heaps by the wayside in order to guide travelers when snow was on the ground. The plain is called Pamir, and you ride across it for 12 days altogether, finding nothing but a desert without habitations or any green thing, so that travelers are obliged to carry with them whatever they have need of. The region is so lofty and cold that you do not even see any birds flying. And I must notice also that because of this great cold fire does not burn so brightly nor give out so much heat as usual, nor does it cook food so effectually.

Now, if we go on with our journey toward the east-northeast, we travel a good 40 days, continually passing over mountains and hills or through valleys and crossing many rivers and tracts of wilderness. And all this way you find neither habitation of man nor any green thing, but must carry with you whatever you require. The country is called Dolor. The people dwell high up in the mountains and are savage idolaters, living only by the chase and clothing themselves in the skins of beasts. They are in truth an evil race.—"The Story of Marco Polo," by Noah Brooks, in St. Nicholas.

Titled Beggars. You would be astonished if you knew the number of letters I receive at the beginning of every season from titled people who propose to stay at my hotel, entirely at my expense, during the holidays," said the proprietor of a south coast hotel in the course of a conversation the writer had with him recently.

"So many Americans and merchants from the midlands who have made their pilos hope to scrape up acquaintances which may lead to the marriages of their daughters with aristocrats during the summer season that the way in which they select their hotel is to see what titled persons are staying where they wish to go, and the hotel at which there are the most promising titles and names is invariably the one selected by them, while they make a point of indulging in every extravagance just to prejudice their victims in their favor and exhibit to them their wealth.

The aristocracy know this full well, and impudicious baronets are especially willing to take advantage of it. They know the value of their titles to use as trade advertisements, and many of them get their summer holidays at good hotels absolutely free in this way. Rich merchants are the people who make hotels pay, and we proprietors know that nothing attracts these so well as the names and titles of bachelor baronets; hence we are generally quite willing to entertain these queer proposals."—Pearson's Weekly.

Onions and Sleep. In Rome, Ga., lives an ingenious farmer who was told that onions were efficacious in causing sleep. Being kept awake into every night by the noise of the numerous bees who came to see his daughters, he resolved to try the onion prescription. He did not take it himself, however, but made his daughters eat them every night at supper. The family now retires at an early hour every night, and peace reigns in the household. The onion is mighty and will prevail.—Richmond (Ind.) Register.

CELTIC LULLABY.

Alanna bun dhun, my bright haired child, Sleep sweetly; sleep, my white lamb mild. Ever your red lips smiling to say, The me-cullas, na dhaca me.

Out on the moorland 'tis lonely night, Pale burns the face of the fastborn light, The south of the wild shee quith I hear—Angels of God, guard well my dear.

From harm and evil shield him well, The prils of night and the fairies' spell, When daises dance in the morning light My joy will wake like a flow' not bright.

Maenbla, shorin, oh, softly shorin, (Like lantane waiting the night breeze sweep) Your sweet lips kissing, they seem to say, The me-cullas, na dhaca me.

Where Came Some Flowers. From the Alps came the ranunculus, and from Italy the mignonette in 1528, rosemary from the south of Europe in 1534 and the jasmine from Circassia about 1548. The year 1667 saw the introduction of four time honored favorites, the auricula from Switzerland, the pink from Italy, the gillyflower and carnation from Flanders. Spenser, by the way, in the "Shepherd's Calendar" (1579), classes the carnation, which he calls "coronation," with the purple columbine and the gillyflower as lovers' flowers. Now, the carnation is generally supposed to have derived its name from the carnation or flesh color of the original species. But the word used by Spenser suggests that "coronation" is merely an abbreviation of "coronation," in allusion to the crownlike appearance of the flower and its specific name, Botonica coronaria.

The Philological society's New English Dictionary does not decide which of the derivations is the only true one, though one must have originated in a mistake. Anyhow the shorter form was common in Shakespeare's time, and we have it, on Dame Quickly's authority, that Sir John Falstaff "could never abide carnation; 'twas a color he never liked." Lavender was imported from the south of Europe not later than 1568 and the laburnum from Hungary about 1575, while Sir Walter Raleigh is credited with having brought the snowdrop back with him from his short lived colony of Roanoke, an island off North Carolina, in 1584.—Chambers' Journal.

Old Tavern Rolsters. There were the Sam, the Dog, the Triple Tun and, more famous still, the Old Devil in Fleet street, near Temple Bar, and almost opposite St. Dunstan's church. Here were held those convivial exercises over which Jonson ruled with a despotic hand, and hither to him came flocking the poets of the younger generation—Herrick and Falkland and Sir Kenelm Digby, Marmon, Randolph and Brome, the dramatists, and many more. It was a species of literary club. Its members were "sealed of the tribe of Ben" and called his sons. The dignity of sonship was accorded to Herrick, and throughout his after life he always looked back to his connection with the old poet with a peculiar relish. With the exception of the classical writers and Ben Jonson, the only poets celebrated in his verse are Beaumont, Fletcher and Denham. But to Jonson are consecrated several of his lyrics, and in all of them he is spoken of as the chief of poets, "the rare arch poet."

He sings: Bill me a mighty bowl Up to the brink, That I may drink Unto my Jonson's soul Crown it again, again, And thrice repeat That happy toast To drink to thee, my Ben, and writes an epitaph for him, which begins: Here lies Jonson with the rest Of the poets, but the best. —Gentleman's Magazine.

Latest Freak in Clubdom. The latest development of that fancy which makes men turn to oddities in club life is an association of men about town to be known as the "Society of Pointed Beards." I understand that this organization has fitted itself out already with a constitution and bylaws and all the verbal paraphernalia of a club. Its general character may be inferred from section 1 of article 2 of the constitution, which is as follows: "No one shall be eligible unless he have a carefully cultivated beard of natural and personal growth in good standing and terminated in one symmetrical point a half inch from the apex of the chin of sufficient evidence to preclude controversy."—Cholly Knickerbocker in New York Recorder.

AN ANCIENT CUSTOM.

"Running for the Bottle" is a Feature of Wedding Ceremonies. Mr. Wes B. Smith writes to The Democrat of the last time he attended a wedding where running for the bottle was a feature. Of course in these degenerate days a wedding is not necessary to precipitate a chase for the receptacle, but accounts of the former custom may not be uninteresting.

The practice was in vogue among the aristocracy of England as far back as the sixteenth century. It was handed down to America through the early colonists, but has long since been out of date here. The last chase of this kind, says Mr. Smith, that was performed in this section occurred in November, 1836, at the wedding of Emanuel Mann, father of Judge Russell Mann of Paris, and Ellen Snodgrass, daughter of David Snodgrass, afterward county judge of Harrison. The groom is still living at Millersburg. Emanuel was the son of Peter Mann, a Nicholas county farmer of considerable wealth and intelligence, and, of course, Ellen was a young lady of prominence. So, then, the wedding was quite "swell."

As the custom was, on the morning of the wedding the guests assembled at the home of the bride to await the coming of the bridegroom and his attendants. About one hour before the expected arrival three of the younger gentlemen, Messrs. David Henry, Jack Barrett and Long Sam Van Hook, equipped with whip and spur, mounted their sporting steeds and prepared for the race.

Off they went, out and steel plying upon the horses' hides, over fences, over ditches, through the fields, across the meadows—on they raced to meet the bridegroom. At last the bridal procession was sighted, the "best man" riding in front and holding in view the much prized bottle of whiskey. The race then assumed fresh proportions. Faster flew the steeds. Thicker grew the dust behind them. Now Barrett is in front. Over the next jump Long Sam leads by a nose. Henry leads at the next jump. Now all are together. Down the straight they come as one team. The riders are whipping for their lives. One more lash, one more stride, a supreme effort, and Jack Barrett captured the bottle.

Now Jack has won the right to head the procession. Proudly riding in front, shaking the bottle above his head in the pride of supremacy, he guides the way to the bridal parlor and the ceremony is ended. The bottle, surrounded by a gay array of acclamations, with exquisite floral decorations of mint, was proudly stationed on the sideboard all the lifelong day, that he who would might partake of its contents without let or hindrance.

Mr. Smith adds that no one so far forgot himself as to imbibe too freely. Mr. Snodgrass was a preacher in the Christian church and a model of piety. Though the bottle was master of the occasion, the preacher vetoed all efforts on the part of the younger folks to dance, play "old Sister Phoebe," or even play "pleased or displeased."—Cynthiana (Ky.) Democrat.

Lauder's Valet. Sir Edwin Lauder, the famous animal painter, had an old servant—his butler, valet and faithful slave—named William, who was particularly assiduous in guarding the outer portal. No one could by any possibility gain direct access to Sir Edwin. The answer would invariably be, "Sir Edwin is not at home." The prince consort himself once received this answer when he called, amplified on that occasion by the assurance that "he had gone to a wedding," an entire fiction on William's part, as the prince found out, for, on walking boldly in and round the garden, he noticed Sir Edwin looking out of his studio window. This was the faithful attendant who one day, when a lion had died at "the zoo" and his corpse came up in a four wheeled cab to be painted from, started his master with the question, "Please, Sir Edwin, did you order a lion?"—San Francisco Argonaut.

Wyndham's Debut. Charles Wyndham, the English actor manager, who has had control of the Criterion theater in London for 20 years, is fond of telling how he made his first appearance on the stage when a youngster. "I remember I had to say the line, 'I am drunk with love and enthusiasm,'" he says. "But I was so frightened that I simply blurted out, 'I am drunk,' stopped and rushed off the stage amid roars of laughter."

Announcing the Baby's Birth. In sending announcement cards of a baby's birth the baby's name is printed in full on a small card, which is inclosed with the parents' card. If desired, it may be attached to the larger card by a bow of very narrow white satin ribbon or silver cord. The date of birth is added, but not the weight of the baby, nor any other particulars of any sort whatever. —Ladies' Home Journal.

TRAVELING IN CHINA.

The Most Serious Drawback is the Slowness of Travel. A journey to Europe is such an everyday affair that people who wish to be looked upon as traveled now turn their attention in other directions. The Ost-Asiatische Lloyd, Shanghai, points out that China is a comparatively new field to the excursionist and thinks the western public will be glad to be informed of the mode of travel and its cost in the Flowery Kingdom. The most serious drawback to a trip through China appears to be the slowness of travel. The Lloyd says:

"There are very few straight roads in China. The actual distance between two commercial centers may be comparatively short, but the roads are so tortuous that traveling requires much time. Thus the distance between Yunnan-fu, the capital of the province of Yunnan, and the Yangtse port of Hakow is, on an average, covered in 80 days. The distance is, as the crow flies, 825 miles, but the traveler goes over twice as much. The distance traveled daily varies, of course, with the character of the country. In southern Yunnan, where horses and sedan chairs are available, 30 to 35 miles per day may be accomplished. A sedan chair with three carriers (one as relief) costs \$1 a day. Coolies, carrying 20 to 30 pounds, receive 35 to 40 cents a day. A baggage horse costs 35 to 30 cents a day and carries twice as much as a coolie, but its owner must be paid separately for leading it. Bullocks carry about 150 pounds, but only advance at the rate of 4 to 12 miles a day.

"In Shanai and Shensi two wheel carts are used; also sedan chairs, carried between two mules. Baggage and merchandise are transported on chairs, which carry 300 pounds each, at a cost of 1 1/2 to 2 cents a mile. In the Hunan province wheelbarrows are used, small ones at 20 to 25 cents a day; large ones, pushed by two men, twice that sum. In traveling on water the cost is 12 to 15 cents for a distance of 100 li (about 30 miles) for each person. Meals cost on an average 2 1/2 cents. With regard to security, it must be admitted that traveling is much less dangerous in China than may be supposed. The main roads are generally safe. Attacks from robbers are much more likely to happen on less frequented byways. In districts where the population is not very numerous guards are stationed along the road to protect the caravans. This is especially the case on highways used for the mails. It is, however, advisable to travel armed, especially if one carries articles of value.

Lenz, the American cyclist, passed safely through China. It was in passing through the country of the bloodthirsty Kurds that he met his fate.—Literary Digest.

In a very interesting paper in the American Monthly Magazine, written by Katharine Lewis Spencer, on the "Boston Tea Party," she tells of the sly Irishman, Captain O'Connor, who tried to capture a pocketful of the seized tea, and of his punishment. Let me add another similar tea party anecdote, as told me a few years ago by Isaac Pittman, an old time resident of Boston, then 84 years old. Mr. Pittman said his father was one of the Boston tea party, though the young Mohawk was only 18 years old at the time and joined the patriotic band more for relishing the fun than for noble revolt against the British yoke. He saw O'Connor's coat tails torn off and O'Connor badly battered and bruised, and soon detected another of the party in the act of surreptitiously filling with tea the great flap pockets of his coat. The young patriot crept up unseen and unheeded behind the sneak and cautiously lifted the coat tails containing the precious "China herb" and softly emptied the contents of the pockets into the sea. A few minutes later he heard the tea stealer bitterly bewailing the loss of his office and house keys, which he said "some one must have stolen." The gay young Mohawk had emptied the keys with the pilfered tea into the Boston harbor.—Alice Morse Earle in American Monthly.

It was just after their first tiff following the honeymoon, and John was trying to make it up. "Do you know why I call you the queen of hearts?" he asked. "Yes," she replied. "This wasn't what he expected her to say, but he had to go ahead. "Why?" he asked. "Because when I married I took the Jack," she answered. He made no further attempt to make it up for 35 minutes.—Chicago Post.

Jackie's Mistake. "Did you hear how Jenkins acted when his house was on fire? The only thing he tried to save was the rag-bag." "Yes, but he thought his wife's diamonds were in the rag-bag, while all the time they were safe in the ash heap."—Detroit Free Press.

STILL A BACHELOR.

Not at all, not at all," insisted a Washington bachelor, who would be a most eligible and substantial matrimonial prize if he were less "set in his way." "I'm not at all cynical, and if there be one creature of all the Lord made in the beginning that I think is more admirable than any other creature or than all the other creatures that creature is woman, but when it comes to an indissoluble tie thereto, then I beg to be excused.

"Of course I have a reason," he continued. "If a man did anything without reason, he wouldn't be much of an improvement over the women; but I have an excellent reason for being a bachelor—at least, for the present. Perhaps when I am grown older and my years are approaching the limit I may take a wife, knowing that if I make a mistake I won't have very long to suffer for that she won't if she should make a mistake, but while I am still in the thirties I shall keep those years entirely from the clutch of any aspiring feminine.

"Yes," he continued, "yes, I know I used to be quite a ladies' man, or rather quite the man who was pretty sure to marry the first chance he had, which the so-called ladies' man never does, but I was saved in time, though I lost the girl I was engaged to in the process of having my eyes opened.

"Tell you about it? Certainly I will," he laughed. "It isn't any more than right to my fellow sufferers to show them the way out. You know, I was about half engaged to a girl five or six years ago—she's well married now—and one day I happened to drop into a certain fashionable millinery shop where all the best people go. I don't know why I should have gone in there, but I did it this day, and before I had been in there two minutes I heard a well known voice in active use of language that was fairly making the hair curl on a helpless girl clerk. I listened until I felt the chills chasing each other down my back, and then I went out. That night I called on the possessor of the voice, but I had lost interest, and after one or two attempts I succeeded in having language applied to me that made my hair curl. After that I made it my business to drop into millinery shops of the higher class whenever I could, and in one or two places I could hide away for half an hour at a time, and the number of handsomely dressed and elegant young women whom I have heard abusing their mothers, the clerks and everybody else, with now and then an emphatic word thrown in, frightened me so that I have lost my nerve, and I'm going to wait awhile and forget how unlovely a pampered daughter of fortune may be when she tries. Either that, or I'll marry one of the clerks in the millinery store, and she'll be so grateful to me for rescuing her that she will find her greatest happiness in being my slave forever."

Moral.—Bonnets, not tempers, are for exhibition in millinery stores.—Washington Post.

Novelists Take Themselves Too Seriously. Novelists, as a class, already take themselves too seriously. Atlas holding up the world is only a figure symbolic of the novelist's conception of his own place in the scheme of the universe of today. To the novelist the novel is identical with modern thought—that is, it is the only adequate vehicle of expression for all the moods, broodings, hopes, aspirations, groupings, philosophies and whatnot of modern life. If only the playwright and the editor could be brought to share with the novelist this seriousness of self view, half the reforms necessary to modern civilization would be accomplished at a stroke. Accustom the seriousness of novel reading, lay it as a duty upon the consciousness of novel readers, regardless of the inevitable reaction on novel writers, and the effect upon fiction production is impossible of estimate.—Scribner's.

Crushed Again. "Isn't it awful?" said Mrs. Jenks to her husband. "Isn't what awful?" queried Jenks. "Houston's boy was run over and received infernal injuries." "Infernal, you mean." "No, I mean infernal. I know what I'm talking about." After a quarrel of five minutes Jenks produced a dictionary, and with considerable trouble managed to find "infernal." "There," he exclaimed, "I told you so! Infernal means relating to the lower regions." "Well," replied Mrs. Jenks—and there was a ring of triumph in her voice—"ain't that where he was injured?"—London Answers.

Olden Times. "Why do you say older times?" asked a little girl who had been listening to a Bible story. "Times are ever so much older now than they were in those days."—Brooklyn Eagle.

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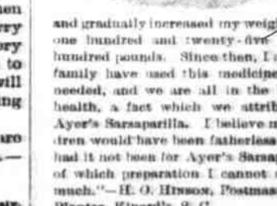
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