

Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., April 11, 1913.

FROM INDIA.

By One on Medical Duty in that Far Eastern Country. Gorgeous "At Homes." Scarcity of Fruits. How We Sleep and Keep Cool. Too Hot for Work.

Dear Home Folk:

JHANSI, MARCH 15th, 1912.
Have I happened to tell you that so far, nothing worse than a little baby toad, in the way of creeping things, has deigned to cross my path since coming to India, although Jhansi is noted for its snakes of all varieties. They come later on, when the hot, wet weather breaks upon us, which we are hoping will be very soon, since the wells supplying the water are giving out, and while the one in our Compound will carry us along many weeks, yet we fear for the poor natives who are limited to certain daily amounts.

To keep us in practice, however, the mosquito abounds in heavy clouds, singing while they work—which takes nothing from their sting. I never knew such tenacity existed in any living thing and it is a fact that they, in their nightly song, far outdo the regimental band or the natives at their plague-prayers.

The Collector of the Province entertained us at "tea" last evening and if I had the power of the pen I would be so glad to describe the gorgeousness of these Eastern "at homes." One must see, to appreciate the kaleidoscopic colors and their settings; truly women and men of all nations, in all their splendor, coming and going, make pictures beyond my description. I can think of nothing but a stage set for a gorgeous spectacular performance, chorus and stars all rushing hither and thither. But they eat and drink exactly the things we at home serve, excepting that the cakes are so very highly colored—I suppose to match the costumes—that I have always declined to risk my fate. The ice cream here is a very poor imitation of the poorest variety at home; but "sweets" (native fudge) which is served every place and at all times, is a delicious concoction.

One thing we do miss in this part of India is the fruit; all we get comes from Bombay, twenty-four hours away, and that but seldom, so that it is quite a pleasure to see anything like a good orange or banana; grapes and apples are the greatest luxury. We can get plenty of guavas, which taste and look like May apples, but are much larger, and surely the taste for them must be cultivated.

Our days are growing warmer and warmer and we never venture out without a pith or cork hat until after sunset, after which a sweater is sometimes most grateful. The winds, if anything, are worse than ever, blowing constantly. The door to my bed-room has never been closed since my coming here. I have two beds—one out and one inside, (a native and an iron one.) Our blind man, who makes our beds and adjusts the mosquito nettings, carries the mattresses, (made of coconut fibre) in each morning, making both beds at night so that if one is tired inside the bed outside is ready for use. I have slept only three nights indoors so far; it is most delightful to lie in the extreme darkness and watch the stars, which seem larger and brighter here, owing to atmospheric conditions. The "dipper" is standing on its handle and is so "out of place" that it has taken some study to locate it.

When we have no moonlight the darkness is like black velvet; so soft and impenetrable, one just feels it and sometimes it almost smothers you, so intensely thick is the wall encountered. Then in contrast to it, for this surely is a country of contrasts, the moon is like a huge calcium lamp, dazzlingly brilliant. In fact, we play tennis with more ease at moon-light than any other time, and at bed time we screen our heads from the light in order to sleep comfortably.

On these nights our lanterns have a long rest; for you know, no matter where one goes after "djee" your "chokidan" always precedes you with a stick and a lantern; the former for snakes, wild things and humans, the latter to show you the path on moonless nights. The roads are so many inches deep with dust that one is easily started by coming head-on into a group of "wildly clad" natives, an elephant or camel, if not well lighted.

MARCH 22nd.

You speak of the "messages" I send home as being short. In this community the telephone is an unheard of thing and as a native bearer was never known to deliver a verbal message to in the least imply the meaning given him, of necessity, every request and errand has to be written. Some days one writes as many as a dozen "chits" (as these letters are called) consequently the time both "chits" and real letter writing consumes means a factor in one's daily rounds, and especially so when there is more labor than hours in which to do it—as the case is here. So much more could be accomplished if it were possible to work the entire day; from noon until four it is so intensely hot that everything involving outside work is stopped, though since my boxes of books and medicines have arrived, it will be much easier to work indoors.

Tonight when coming from the hos-

pital I saw a crowd of natives about a pole and on inquiry found they were offering a prayer to "Sita," the God of smallpox. Since the plague is abating, smallpox has broken out and instead of these poor, hopelessly ignorant natives trying to clean themselves physically and ward off disease, they paint a huge pole to resemble a most grotesque human face, set it up and give of what they have to satisfy the all powerful "Sita," that he may take away the disease. The Hindu seems so intelligent in some ways; is most bidable, easy to teach and quick to learn, but the truth is not in them consequently they believe no one and the situation remains a serious proposition to serious workers among them. The Hindu will not eat meat of any kind, consequently his main diet is composed of rice and Nall, a form of grain that grows in small pods (like peas), on small low bushes, and which is most nutritious and wholesome, but not very palatable to the uninitiated.

(Continued next week.)

MUST HAVE BEEN DRUNK

Seemed Only Plausible Explanation of Conduct of Man on New York Train.

At Matawan the New York bound train, pretty well filled with passengers, took on a number more, among them a family of eight—stout mother, stout aunt and six children. The children ranged in age from a baby in arms to a youngster of eight or nine years. There were few vacant seats in the car into which this family party trilled, and the stout mother, with her youngest in her arms, and the stout aunt, carrying a large bundle, managed to squeeze into two unoccupied places, leaving the children to shift for themselves.

Along toward the middle of the car sat a small, shabby, kind-faced man who, observing that the five children were standing about unsteadily in the car aisle, arose smilingly and went to their rescue. With much difficulty he succeeded in finding seats for the youngsters, giving up his own place to two of them and standing in the aisle himself.

"Funny about that man takin' so much trouble gettin' the children seats," observed the stout mother to the stout aunt.

"Yes," was the reply; "I've been looking at him. I guess he must be drunk."

HOW THEY DO IN RUSSIA

Sixty-Seven Persons Are Tried Behind Closed Doors and Given Prison Sentences.

"They do things in a strange way in Russia," says a letter in the Russische Korrespondenz from a correspondent in Warsaw. "Behind closed doors sixty-seven members of the Polish Socialist party were tried. After a session of ten days it became known that ten of the accused were dismissed, twenty-five of the remaining fifty-seven were sentenced to deportation and prison sentences were pronounced against the remaining thirty-two in terms ranging from seventeen years to two years eight months. In all, 279 years of prison service was dealt out, to say nothing of the twenty-five unfortunates who were deported. And all this behind closed doors."

Britain's Strange Sect.

The Jezreelites of Gillingham, in Kent, England, have once more been brought prominently before the public in the old country. The founder of this strange sect, which is but little known in these days, was a certain James White, a private in the Sixteenth regiment, who, on his conversion, took the names of "James Jereshom Jezreel." White gathered enthusiasts round him and, like the early Christians, the Jezreelites had all things in common. It was a principle of the sect that its members were the first portion of the 144,000, twice told, who shall receive Christ when he appears to reign on earth. Shortly after the foundation of the sect, "Jezreel" and his followers commenced to build a huge temple, intended to hold 20,000 people, near Chatham. "Jezreel" died in 1885, and the work was never completed, but the temple—tenantless and bare—survives today as a memento of one of the maddest of modern dreams.

Wanted It Anyhow.

There recently sought the services of a dentist a quaint young Swede, who, at the urgent insistence of his newly-acquired wife, came to "get his mouth fixed."

There were a number of teeth too far gone to be filled. Accordingly, these were extracted, and then the dentist made an appointment with the Swede for further sittings, when the filling would be done. Instead of leaving the office Olaf hung about expectantly.

"Is there something more you want done?" finally asked the dentist. "Vell, I dunno," said Olaf, looking doubtfully at the ceiling. "I tank maybe I like leedle gas. My meests tole me I hov to tak some for my toots. Eef she don' hort too much I tank maybe I better hov about twanty-fr cants wort."

Tessie—I saw Dick Huggem kiss you last night.

Jessie—Did you see me kiss him?

Tessie—No, but—

Jessie—Then you missed the most thrilling part.

THE POOREST OF ALL PEOPLE

Natives of the Arctic Who Have Enough to Eat Are Considered Very Fortunate.

I have not known so poor a winter during the whole of my stay among the Eskimos (now 22 years), says a writer in the Christian Herald. While the coast is ice-bound, the days short, snowstorms frequent and the thermometer often 40 degrees below zero, it is not possible for the Eskimo to do much to secure a living. One way for the women to produce something was to cut holes through the sea ice, which reaches a thickness of six feet, and there they stood fishing for rock cod, most days securing only between five and ten fish. The mission endeavored to help, but poverty was so general that all resources were taxed to the utmost.

An outsider has no idea of what poverty among the Eskimos means. At the best of times the wants of an Eskimo are few and his food consists of the coarsest of substances. Seal walrus and whale meat form a large part of their diet, and the blubber of these animals serves in the place of pork or butter.

In China the famished inhabitants subsisted on roots or some inferior vegetable, but here the vegetable kingdom has nothing to offer. The earth is frozen and deeply covered with snow and ice; the birds have gone south and one might walk for miles without seeing a living creature. At the same time it is of interest to know even these primitive people have for ages found a kind of substitute for food somewhere. Along the beach, which is known to have plenty of seaweed, holes are cut through the thick ice and the seaweed and mussels pulled up through the holes, and it is on record that the Eskimos have sustained life on this, one might say, refuse of the sea, during the long winter months.

The Eskimo has no word for "God" in his language, and it has been fitly marked that the very austere aspect of life may have helped to exclude the conception of a superhuman benevolent Being from the beliefs and superstitions of these people of the Arctic.

THOSE WHO DO NOT THINK

Eskimos Believe It Is Not Necessary If They Have Enough Meat to Eat.

Where the physical struggle for life is at its keenest, as it is among the Eskimos, the years glide by free from the more subtle cares and worries of the civilized man. The Eskimo, says Mr. Knud Rasmussen in "The People of the Polar North," does not count the days, and keeps no record of time. All his thoughts are centered on hunting.

Once I asked an Eskimo who seemed to be plunged in reflection, "What are you thinking about?"

He laughed at my question, and said: "Oh, it is only you white men who go so much for thinking! Up here we only think of our flesh-pits, and whether we have enough for the long dark of the winter. If we have meat enough then there is no need to think. I have meat and to spare!"

I saw that I had insulted him by crediting him with thought. On another occasion I asked an unusually intelligent Eskimo, Panigpak, who had taken part in Peary's last north polar expedition:

"Tell me, what did you suppose was the object of all your exertions? What did you think when you saw the land disappear behind you and you found yourself out on the drifting ice-floes?"

"Think?" said Panigpak, astonished. "I did not need to think. Peary did that!"

Eating becomes the great thing with the Eskimos. I once excused myself, when paying a visit, with the plea that I had already eaten and had had enough. I was laughed at, and the answer I received was: "There thou talkest like a dog! Dogs can be stuffed till they are satisfied and can eat no more; but people—people can always eat!"

Art and Engineering.

The close connection of the artist and the mechanical instinct is shown again in recent developments in France.

France is doubtless the most eminent modern nation in the world of art. But in the past 30 years she has come to be one of the foremost in mechanical engineering; as the development of the automobile and the aeroplane bears witness. Coincidentally, there has been at least a relative falling off in her standing in art. This looks as if the demand of modern times had turned machine-wards the genius which in an earlier day would have expressed itself with brush and chisel.

The artist and the engineer or inventor have the same faculty of seeing a thing before it is finished, the same keen sense of proportion and relation, the same intense desire to put ideas into concrete form.

When America pauses from her rush in mechanical invention, she will develop an artistic power that will astonish the world.

Historic British Ship.

One of the most interesting ships afloat is the Eagle, which lies in one of the docks of the River Mersey, England. For more than fifty years the Eagle has served as a training ship. It was launched in 1804, and took part in several important engagements in the early part of the last century, when the Napoleonic power was at its height.

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