

A FIRE IN JAPAN.

FUNNY LILLIPUTIAN METHODS OF JAPANESE FIREMEN.

Fire Engines That Are of Very Little Service in Fighting Flames—Plucky Hook and Ladder Men Who Show No Judgment in Their Work.

Suddenly our practiced eyes caught the distant boom of the fire bell. Everybody else heard it and the effect was electrical. While one of the men ran up the ladder and began to hammer away at our station bell, the officers hurried on their uniforms and sprang on to their horses, kept ready caparisoned, the captain arming himself with a huge wisp of horsehair, the lieutenant seizing his standard—a spear, from the end of which hung a horse tail. Meanwhile, with much shouting and no doubt bad language, the "brigade" had harnessed itself to the three engines, and the procession was formed—officers leading, engines next, hook and ladder men with their three visitors bringing up the rear. Out we went into the snowdrift street, up which a fierce northeaster was sweeping. All Shinagawa seemed to have sprung into active life during the few minutes which had elapsed since the first notes of the fire bell.

Men, women and children swarmed out of every doorway, clustered about the first floor balconies, and even crowded the roofs all chattering, gesticulating and uttering exclamations of terror and wonder as they gazed at the broad lurid glare in the sky. Far away as they were from the scene of conflagration, there was no retiring after their first curiosity had been satisfied. A man in a Victoria street Westminster, who was the reflection of a fire, say, in the city, may go to bed with a certain sense of security, but because two or three miles separate the Japanese spectator from the burning houses he can be by no means sure that in the course of an hour or so he may not have to rush out of his house with as many of his lares and penates as he can gather together.

When we reached the locality of the fire a striking scene was presented to our eyes. From half a dozen houses the flames were bursting forth with almost demoniacal noise and fury. Half a dozen more had already been gutted and were mere shapeless shells of smoldering timber. Hundreds of men were covering the roofs of the houses in the line of fire beneath the weight of their humble household goods, while piles of bedding, domestic utensils, stocks in trade and all sorts of lumber lay in the snow. More than one quartet of men swiftly passed us, bearing on their shoulders a shapless something wrapped in dark cloth, and we knew that the fire had claimed other victims than mere shanties of paper and wood. Our spirits got to work with commendable smartness, and, as there happened to be an abundance of water, were soon pouring their feeble dribbles on the flames.

Third! third! third! the spirit ladders, but the flames seemed to roar with laughter and dance as if in mockery of the poor little streams of water which were turned on them, and drove the lieutenant from house to house with such rapidity that more than once it seemed as if nothing but a miracle could save him. Meanwhile the hook and ladder corps was hard at work, and it was the humblingly contempt at the puny efforts of the "engines" we could not withhold our hearty applause at the indomitable pluck, the energy and the activity of the poor little fellows who manipulated the hooks and ladders. Salimander-like, they seemed to revel in work where the flames were fiercest and the danger greatest.

But can't you all this heroic dash and self sacrifice unbacked by common sense? We three representatives of the west watched it all with almost a feeling of anger that, for the sake of a little pride pocketing, such a wanton destruction of hearts and homes, such a risking of valuable lives should be tolerated by a people in so many other respects advanced thinkers and practical reformers. One engine from Welling street or a single American fire company could have nipped the fire in the bud an hour before, but we were indeed guests, and besides, being quite aware of the delicate grounds upon which the relationship between us and our Japanese hosts stood, were diffident in proffering advice.

But at last we could stand it no longer, for the fire, alight seconded in its ravages by a brisk northeast wind, threatened to consume the entire quarter as far as the city boundaries. So we pushed our way forward to where the captain was thundering mathematics and exhortations in a manner which plainly betrayed that he had lost self control, and it was the humblingly suggested that if the hook and ladder company was to turn its attention to a group of yet unburned houses standing in the direct line of the fire instead of wasting energy worthily of a better cause upon houses which nothing could save a gap would be created over which the flames, furious as they were, would hardly be likely to leap.

The old gentleman did not welcome our suggestion with enthusiasm, nor did we expect that he would. Indeed he affected to treat it cavalierly, and under the plea that we were standing in a dangerous position motioned us back into the crowd. But we had the satisfaction of observing that the extreme urgency of the situation had prompted him to act on our advice, and we presently saw the hook and ladder company lumber up and dash off at the double toward the group of houses indicated by us. The inhabitants of these shanties, squatting outside with their heaps of goods and chattels, evidently clinging with the old World tendency to the hope that the gods or the firemen or something would save calamity of their homes, manifested warmly when the hook and ladder men told them they were about to take the unheard of step of pulling down untouched houses, but the captain riding up soon silenced their objections in a harangue which from its sound was evidently very much more formal than elegant and the work of destruction, or rather of salvation, commenced, and in a very few minutes the hooks and battering poles had made an open space which was an effective bar to the progress of the flames. But even they seemed to be imbued with a spirit of patriotism, for they made fierce efforts to keep the gut and so nullify the counsel of the "foreign devils."

But feebler and feebler grew their leaps, and gradually they subsided into a grumbling and snorting and hissing which seemed to express almost in language baffled rage. So at 6 o'clock in the morning, the great Shinagawa fire was staid, and we returned to the fire station with our hosts and their bearded and singed subordinates.—Temple Bar.

How Dudley Felt About It. "Can you stand on your head?" asked a visitor of little Dudley. "No," he replied; "it is too high up."—Youth's Companion.

Johnny's Reason. Visiting Friend—Why is it, Johnny, that you think Dr. Butler isn't a good doctor? Johnny—Cause he never finished our baby—he didn't put a hair on his head.—Kate Field's Washington.

Suicides in the Bible. The first instance of suicide recorded in scripture is that of Samson (B. C. 1117). The second is that of Saul (B. C. 1055). Rather than fall into the hands of the Philistines when hard pressed in battle he drew his sword and fell upon it, or so died. Judas Iscariot, through remorse, went and hanged himself.—Albany Express.

QUEER SIGNS.

Laughable Notices That May Be Seen on New York Thoroughfares.

If the casual observer or stranger in New York is of a humorous turn of mind he will find a great deal in the signboards of minor merchants not only amusing but highly interesting. Probably the most appropriate and concise sign in New York is one on Second avenue, near Eighty-sixth street, which reads, "Get Goods." On the Bowery a cheap restaurant offers to give you "Coffee and Cakes Off the Griddle."

A large sign in Fulton street of a defunct kind simply says, "The Neglected Photographer." A rat poison man seems to be jealous of his fame, at the first glance, but a closer inspection shows that it is business policy that prompts him to say, "The Original I—All Others Copy." There are several "Original I's" in the neighborhood. A glazier in South Fifth avenue has a large illuminated sign, showing on one side a picture of a boy carrying a ladder one end of which has gone through a large show window. Underneath the picture are the words, "Glass Put out by Carelessness." On the reverse side are very good pictures of the proprietor of the glazier shop putting in the glass, accompanied by the words, "Glass Put in by"—the proprietor. On South street, near Dover, a beer saloon has in front a picture of a gigantic schooner with the warning, "No Two Men Allowed to Drink Out of the Same Schooner."

A lady of color in West Third street strolled in a carriage by her calling as follows: "Go! Out To Witwain and skrubbin taken in and Dun Heart!" Whether she is a disciple of the late Josh Billings or follows her own sweet will in the matter of orthography is a matter of profound conjecture. "Broken Bones Set and Mended—No Pain," is the very an umbrella repairer attracts trade in Eighth avenue, near One Hundred and Forty-fifth street. Fourth avenue has a baker who advertises "Pies, Pastry and Oysters!" You can get "Pies, Pastry and Oysters" at a West Broadway bakery.

"Fresh Salt Oysters, also Larger Bier," he had in East Ninth street, "Boots Polish'd Right" is a familiar old friend on Sixth avenue. There is a "classical" booter on Houston street, and a "Hotel de Horse" in East Broadway. A laundryman calls his business "A Society for the Encouragement of Wearing Clean Shirts," and an independent gas-you-please speaker announces that he loses "Orn kinds of hours with his feet." That women are indulging all of men's work is shown by a Madison street sign reading, "Mrs. Capt. McCoy, instructor of practical navigation."

Some people seem to have taken special pains to pick out a business which harmonize with their names—thus, Herr Weinberg keeps a saloon, John Schwab runs a drug store, Kaitness & Co. are in the mineral water business, and Coffin is a druggist. William Shotte and Jonathan Fell deal in sportsmen's supplies, but, oddly enough, Mr. Hatter is a shoemaker. Monkey sells monkeys, and Mr. Ode is not a poet, but a confectioner. Virtue deals in Bibles, and Hell is a carpenter. Tennyson is an electrician, Milton is a newsman and Fielding a druggist. Angel makes pianos, and Devil is a fresco painter. Westminster Abbey keeps a grocery in Front street.

In a Spanish tobacco and cigar store in Maiden lane if you call for a cigar you can have your choice of "Segars," "Sigars" or "Cigars" all for the same money.—New York Recorder.

New Mexico's First Circus.

I was living in Albuquerque, N. M., when the first circus struck that country. Few people in that country at that time either spoke or read the English language. Cole came to the country with his show and soon learned that the natives did not read anything but Spanish. He had his acts with him and the office with which I was connected took them and put in the reading matter in Spanish. The church in that section at that time ruled everything, as it does today. Cole was advised of that fact and was told that he would have to get the clergy to endorse his show before the laymen would patronize it. He employed couriers to take the bills and go to the country with them and give the bills to the priests. At the same time he sent so each priest complimentary tickets to the show.

A Lover in 1761.

My present suit and service are paid to a certain lady, who is as fearful of receiving any tokens of my affection as I am of offering them. I am only permitted to admire her at a distance, an ogler or a leer are all that she will permit me to make; if I move my finger, it puts her all in a sweat; and like the sensitive plant, she would shrink and die away at a touch. I also once plucked up courage sufficient to attempt speaking her by her hand, but she resisted my attack by so close a touch of her fist that my grasp was presented with nothing but a pair of pointed knuckles and a long thumb nail, and I was directly after slung through with a violent stroke on my jawbone. If I walk out with her, I use all my endeavors to keep close to her side, but she whisks away from me as though I had some catching distemper about me. In short, sir, I begin to despair of ever coming in close contact with her. But what is still more provoking, though she keeps me at so respectful a distance, she tamely permits a strapping fellow of the guards to pat her on the cheek, play with her hand, and even approach her lips, and that, too, in my presence.—Bonnel Thornton.

A Fable of the Great Rachel.

"Look at the presents Rachel made to every one," says the panygnysters. They forgot to mention that an hour afterward she regretted her generosity, and from that moment she never left off scheming how to get the thing back. Every one knew this. Beantvallet, to whom she gave a magnificent sword one day, instead of thanking her, said: "I'll have a chain put to it, mademoiselle, so as to fasten it to the wall of my dressing room. In that way I shall be sure that it will not disappear during my absence."

They Won Anyhow.

She was playing a game of whist at a summer resort. She held seven hearts, which were trumps. Her last hand opponent led the ace of spades, she trumped it, she then led a diamond; a gentleman at her elbow whispered to her, "Why didn't you lead a trump?" "Oh," said she, "I don't get 'em often, and I want to keep them to look at." Her partner took the king of spades, which he trumped, and she trumped the ace. She put a trump on it promptly. That was about her average style of playing, yet she came out a winner. And a dear girl she is.—Sage and Leather Reporter.

Bent on Paying His Fare.

He sat in a Sixth avenue elevated railroad car and twirled a five-cent piece expectantly. At length he turned to a reporter, who happened to be sitting near him, and said: "What's the fare on this road?" "Five cents," said the reporter. "Don't they collect it?" "Certainly not. You buy a ticket at the station where you get on and put it in the box on the platform."

"That's strange," said the man with the unused nickel. "Somehow I've slipped in without paying. You see, I've added confidentially, 'I'm from California, and we don't ride around in this sort of thing out there. Guess I can put in a ticket when I get off, can't I?" "Well," said the reporter, "the elevated road crowds and hustles us so that some New Yorkers wouldn't hesitate to 'beat' the road if it were in such an intentional manner as you have done it."

"I think I had better pay," said the Californian decidedly. And at fourteenth street he left the train and said to the ticket checker, "Somehow or other I have ridden up here from Chambers street without paying anything."

"I saved the nickel, didn't I?" "I want to pay now." "Hey!" "I say I want to pay for my ride." "Don't live in New York, do you?" "No." "Didn't come from Jersey or Brooklyn, did you?" "No." "Where did you come from?" "California."

"Christian Endeavor convention?" "Yes." "Well, you go around to that window," gasped the checker, "plunk down five cents for a ticket, and come around and put it in this box. Then let me look at yer. I've chopped tickets goin on three years, but I never seed a man like you before."—New York Tribune.

How Distant Is Nova?

We know nothing of the distance of the Nova from our system, but the assumption is not an improbable one that it was as far away from us as the Nova of 1878, for which Sir Robert Ball has calculated a parallel. If this be so, the emission of light suddenly set up in the very faint stars, certainly within two days, and possibly, as in the case of the Nova of 1860, within a few hours, was much greater than the light emitted by our sun. Yet within some fifty days after its discovery, at the end of January, its light fell to a parallel with that of the stars, and in some three months to the one-thousandth part. So long as its spectrum could be observed, the chief features remained unchanged.

Under what conditions could we suppose the sun to cool down sufficiently for its light to decrease to a similar extent in so short a time, and without the intervening material changes in the solar spectrum? It is therefore scarcely conceivable that we have to do with the conversion of gravitational energy into light and heat. On the view we have ventured to suggest, the rapid cooling down, after some swaying to and fro of the tidal disturbances and the closing in again of the outer cooler gases, together with the want of transparency which often comes in under such circumstances, might account reasonably for the very rapid and at first curiously fluctuating waning of the Nova, as well as for the want of changes in the spectrum.—William Huggins in Fortnightly Review.

The Confessor of the Fifteenth Century.

Accustomed as we are to modern ideas and customs, it is hard to comprehend the genuine father confessor of the Fifteenth century, the supreme counselor of the sovereigns in virtue of his office and in the confidence of the confessional. Fray Hernando de Tavera, first priest of the monastery of El Prado in Valladolid, later bishop of Avila and lastly archbishop of Granada, when seated in the confessional deemed his seat higher than the throne, and held himself to be the dispenser of the earthly and eternal salvation of the sovereigns.

Even in his first confession he had an alteration with the confessor. He had desired to confess either standing or sitting; he replied that she should do neither, but kneel at his feet. He was as rightly able to call himself minister of state as of the treasury, and as well minister of the treasury as of instruction and fine arts, without question as to the ministry of good behavior; and so he laid his confidence in the management of the state equally in the choice of her daily reading in the royal library, and asked his counsel alike concerning the most important decrees and the most ordinary household affairs.—Enilio Castel in Century.

On Aerial Navigation.

In a paper on modern aerial navigation, read by Captain J. D. Fullerton, R. E., before the Royal Aeronautical Society, the object was to show that the science of aeronautics was based upon simple rules and common sense, and not upon wild and vague theories opposed to all principles of nature. Captain Fullerton divided aerial navigation into two distinct branches: Ballooning or navigation by means of machines lighter than the air, and navigation by means of machines heavier than the air. Describing the requirements of a proposed war balloon, he said these were that it should be able to carry three or four passengers, a supply of explosive shells, and a machine gun or two; that it should be able to travel at the rate of about thirty miles an hour, and that it should be so constructed that it could keep up with almost any warship afloat.—London Nature.

The Exodus of Organ Grinders.

The first warm day of spring will see those who have wintered in the city pack their ponderous organs on their backs and make for the provinces. They scatter all over the country, going as far west as Denver and all through the New England states. They work their way, as a rule, tramping oftentimes from town to town juggling their fifty pound instruments through the hot, dusty country for a score of miles to make probably a few dollars, and then on to the next. The monkey long since made his exit from the cities, and it is only rarely that they are now seen in the small towns. A man in Brooklyn made a fortune in raising and training them, and he received often as much as fifty dollars for a well trained monkey.—New York World.

The Boy's Inmost Thoughts.

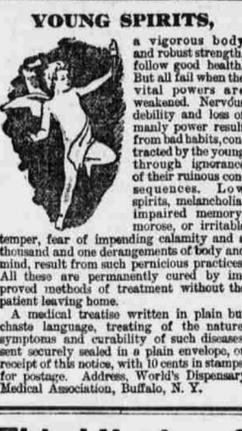
Alden's mother was a woman of more than medium height, weighing nearly 300 pounds. She was subject to severe "heart attacks," and after one that nearly proved fatal and while anticipating a return that would end her life she called Alden to her bedside to give him a few parting words of motherly counsel, so necessary to a boy of six years. With the thought of a near death to give pathos and earnestness to her remarks, she spoke of leaving him and showed him what he must do to grow up a good man after she was gone. The conversation seemed to make the desired impression, and he went to his room thoughtful that she more than half regretted having worked upon his sympathies in such a manner. Wishing to know the depth of his thought she said, "Well, my dear, of what are you thinking?" One can well imagine her feelings when he remarked with evident concern, "Oh, I was just thinking what an awful big coffin I'd take!" It's needless to say that the boy thought her work was "of that" nature.—New York Times.

The Sweet Tooth.

In most cases where we find considerable quantities of sugar conspicuously massed in any part of a plant organism the sweet juice is placed there on purpose to be eaten. In comparatively small masses it is stored in flowers or elsewhere for the use of insects. In larger amounts it is stored in fruits for the use of birds and mammals. And it is these conspicuous storehouses of simple sugar that man in the first instance began to seize upon for his own purposes. Himself a descendant of the fruit eating monkeys, he has always remained to a great extent a fruit eater. In the tropics to this day he subsists largely upon plantains, bananas, mangoes, bread fruit, coconuts, though he also depends to no small degree upon subterranean storehouses of starch or sugar, such as yams and sweet potatoes. In temperate climates, on the other hand, he derives his food more from seeds than from fruits. Wheat, rye, maize, barley, oats, rice and millets form the staple of his diet, while his principal subterranean food, the potato, is, starchy, not sugary. Accordingly his inherited sweet tooth feels the need for sugar—a need which he has endeavored from all time to satisfy, especially in youth, with dried fruits, figs, raisins and other like delectables.—Cornhill Magazine.

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DAUER'S ORCHESTRA—MUSIC FOR balls, picnics, parties, receptions, weddings and concert work furnished. For terms address E. Bauer, conductor, 117 Wyoming ave., over Hubber's music store.

HOPFON D. SWARTZ—WHOLESALE lumber, Price building, Scranton, Pa. GEORGE BROTHERS, PRINTER'S SUPPLIES, Stationery, paper bags, twine, Warhous, 120 Washington ave., Scranton, Pa.

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CENTRAL RAILROAD OF N. J.

LEHIGH AND SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION. Anthracite coal used exclusively, insuring cleanliness and comfort.

TIME TABLE IN EFFECT MAY 20, 1894. Trains leave Scranton for Pittston, Wilkes-Barre, etc. at 8:25, 11:15,