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From Lippincott's Magazine for this Month.

MY CHINA BOYS.

My first China boy was sent over to me from a Chinese intelligence office in San Francisco by a 'Wells Fargo' agent. I had written a note to the office asking for a cook.

'Here's a parcel for you,' laughed the Wells Fargo agent as he lifted a small mummy swathed in blue cotton from the wagon and stood him up against the wall. Before I had recovered from my astonishment and dismay the agent was gone and I was left alone with the blue-cotton mummy.

'What *am* I to do with you? I soliloquized, rather than asked. Then for the first time I saw in the middle of the queer little face a pair of brilliant, oblique black eyes, very small, in accordance with the size of the creature, but sparkling with the vitality of a dozen lives.

'Plenty cook,' said an eager voice.

'But you are so little.'

'Plenty cook'

'You cannot reach to the top of a kitchen-table.'

'Plenty cook.'

It was too late to send back the infinitessimal cook until the next day, so I gave him permission to show me what he could do in the mean time.

At once he became possessed of a fury of work, sweeping, dusting, washing windows, and performing the various household duties like a silent whirlwind. Every few moments there was a pause, the twinkling eyes appeared, and the question 'Do?' ('What shall I do next?') was put to me with unabated eagerness. Never before or since have I seen any one work with the same honest enjoyment of physical labor. When everything had been scoured and cleaned and put into the most perfect order and the question '*Do?*' was thrown at me again as from a catapult, I was at my wits' end. 'Do?' he repeated, as I paused to reflect. Fortunately I happened, in my perplexity, to look out of the window and saw the garden hose. I was saved Always, after that, when the '*Do?*' became too alarmingly imperative, I sent Ah Choon out to water the garden. It was a never-ending source of delight to him, and an employment that might be prolonged indefinitely, Ah Choon not considering the work properly done until the water stood in pools on the surface of the ground.

I did not send Ah Choon back the next morning as I had intended. He amused and interested me too much, and then I very soon began to be really attached to the little fellow. Some of my neighbors tell different stories of their experience with the 'peculiar institution,' but my Chinese servants have been invariably so gentle, willing, affectionate and clever that, whether I sent away my boy or he left of his own accord, I have always felt sad when he said good-by, and pleased when he came to see me afterward.

Ah Choon's beginning was no flash in the pan. He kept his unabated energy to the end, which, alas! came all too soon. I gave him a dollar and a a half a week, afterwards increased to two dollars. He surely could have been no more than ten when he came to me, but in a few weeks he not only did most of the cooking and all the chamber-work, but took entire charge of a pony and phæton and attended to the light work of a large garden.

An old lady came from the east to visit me, and, my health not being good, volunteered to take all home-cares off my hands. Then came the tug of war. First, 'grandma,' as we called her, came to complain that the China boy would not obey her. When I sent for Ah Choon and asked what he meant by such conduct, he said, 'You buy this house?'—'Yes,' I said.—'Old lady no buy him?'—'No.' 'Then old lady no bossee. You bossee-woman. Old lady too muchee sass.' I explained the situation as well as I could in Pigeon-English, and remembering the respect paid to their parents and elders by the Chinese, I reminded him of that, and asked how he would like to have a 'Melican' boy treat his mother as he treated grandma. He listended to all I had to say, seeming impressed by it, repeating many times, 'Elka klukla me Me no sass old lady.' Shortly after he ran over to his cousin to borrow a phrase-book, 'elka klukla me,' means 'excuse me.'

In a little while grandma came back again, crying, 'I do believe that China boy is swearing at me in Chinese now.'

Again Ah Choon stood before me, his shining eyes dimmed with tears. 'Ah Choon,' said I reproachfully, 'you said you would be good to the old lady, and now she says you talk badly in Chinese to her.'

Ah Choon's dark face flushed, and the tears poured down his cheeks. 'No can do! no can do!' he cried. 'I no sass old lady Melican talkee. Old lady talkee, talkee, too much sass,—allee time too muchee sass. Lilly China boy no can talkee; lilly China boy no can sass. Bim-by lilly China boy *die!*,

I am bound to say that my sympathies leaned toward the 'lilly China boy.' To grandma I counselled moderation, advising her to allow Ah Choon a little latitude, and take no notice so long as he confined himself to his mother-tongue, which from that time he did religiously.

Very soon Ah Choon became an expert operator on the sewing-machine. In the evening, after studying his lessons with an assiduity that might put a 'Melican' boy to shame, he amused himself by making full suits of Chinese clothing for my little daughters' dolls. Success firing his ambition, he went further, and produced coats, trousers and feminine apparel of all sorts, that were as complete in detail and fit as though fashioned by the most able of dolls' dressmakers. With a set of old modeling tools and a lump of clay he moulded grotesque and realistic images with a genuine artistic feeling that, similarly shown in a white boy, would be pronounced a budding genius.

One Sunday we found that the entire dinner had been stolen by tramps the night before, all the shops were closed, and, as we lived some little distance in the country, there seemed but a gloomy outlook for us. 'If I had only known it before the thieves were turned loose!' I remarked; 'but I doubt if they are large enough to eat, even if they could be caught.'

I had hardly turned away before I heard Ah Choon's voice calling from the chicken yard. He had a pair of the largest fowls tied together by the legs with his queue, and was weighing them with the cock-scales. He certainly was a boy of resources. Was anything broken, Ah Choon mended it. He invented novel uses for pots and pans that were past their prime; made new articles out of old ones.—in fact, was a sort of Chinese Robert Penfold. Nor, though easily moved to tears, as are all Chinese, was Ah Choon without personal courage. Some incipient hoodlums attacked him one Sunday as he was returning from Sabbath-school, which he attended regularly Just in time to save the little heathen a couple of passers-by interfered, stopped the persecution, and sent Ah Choon home with an ugly knife-cut that had almost severed an ear from his head and a slash across one hand. He very reluctantly allowed me to bind up his wounds, saying, 'All light; bym-by get well; nev' mind.'

When I asked him how it happened, he drew himself up with all the pride of a fighting general, saying, 'One, two, sixteen Irish, bad Irish boy, fight one lilly China boy. Lilly China boy plenty fight; lilly China boy no 'flaid; lilly China boy no lun; too muchee like fight!'

Many times after that I had to rush to the 'lilly China boy's rescue. When the schools closed, some of the boys who had taken up the feud rode their ponies at Ah Choon, who ran out when he saw them coming and stood in the street. No expostulations or threats could keep him in the house after he heard the ponies' hoofs.

'Lilly China boy no flaid die,' he would say. 'Melican boy lide over China boy, killee him; go jail one, two, sixteen years! Maybe p'leeceman hang Melican boy. He no likee that. Lilly China boy likee that welly much.'

An old man near by, retiring from the photographic business, presented me with his camera and chemicals. I had a skylight let into the stable-roof and made a dark closet in one corner. Nothing could exceed Ah Choon's delight and wonder at these mystic preparations. Between the turning of the muffins he would dash out to take a look at the blood-red landscape through the stained window. When everything was complete, as the family were all away, I took Ah Choon for a model. Fearing lest he should meddle with the chemicals when I had my eye off him, I showed him a bottle of cyanide of potassium with a skull and cross-bones under the word 'poison' upon the label.

'Savvy! savvy!' said he. Rapidly opening an imaginary bottle, and swallowing an imaginary piece of cyanide, he dropped suddenly at full length on the floor and went through all the writhings and contortions of a fearful death by poison. After one last, long, struggling gasp he crossed his hands upon his breast, turned up his eyes, and dropped his jaw.

The simulation was a little too horribly exact for my nerves, so I compelled a speedy resuscitation of the corpse and placed him in front of the camera. When he saw it turned toward him he gave one start of dismay, then stood perfectly still as I bade him, grinning, in spite of his evident fear of this unknown instrument that had to do with deadly poisons and skulls and cross-bones, at the comical appearance I presented with my head under the black velvet camera-curtain. Nothing could exceed his delight at the result, unless, perhaps, his disgust at the position he had taken; he was so unhappy about it that I made another trial, allowing him to pose himself. He placed himself stiffly upon a chair, elbows out, both hands upon his parted knees, (the Chinese position of dignity), regretting meanwhile that he had neither a fan nor a vase of flowers at his side, both of which, from a Mongolian point of view, are necessary accessories to a portrait.

This picture, though a perfect success from his own æsthetic stand-point, he had no desire to possess, but only to look at occasionally. I offered to give it to him to send to his mother, but he said she would not be pleased, but, on the contrary, very angry, explaining, as well as I could understand, that the whole affair savored too much of witchcraft, and she would probably fear that in consenting to it he had in some way placed himself in the power of the 'white barbarian;' adding, however, with his favorite remark, 'Lilly China boy no 'flaid; muddah he 'flaid, lilly China by he no 'flaid.'

Ah Choon's reign in the kitchen might have continued until this day but for an unfortunate accident; he set the house on fire. All the family but myself and the little children were out at the time (midnight), and Ah Choon, who had been reading a Chinese novel in bed, fell asleep and knocked his cankle over on the chair. The light and crackling noise woke me. I instinctively knew what had happened, and flew up to his room, where I found the poor boy almost dead from suffocation. I threw a pail of water over him and dragged him from the fire. He recovered his senses in a few moments, and I sent him for a hatchet to chop open the floor, as the fire was running between it and the ceiling. It seemed as though he was back in the twinkling of an eye, but he had found time, as I afterward discovered to carry the two little children, without awakening them, into the front garden, where he left them wrapt in a blanket quietly sleeping on the grass. With a less intelligent ally than Ah Choon the fire would have beaten me, but with his deft fingers and quick brain to help me, I soon got it under, and we sat down, drenched with water, smoke-begrimed and panting, to rest. Curiously enough the fire had burned nothing belonging to me but the chair and a spot through the floor; but, like a Nemesis, had followed all Ah Choon's belongings and reduced them to ashes. Even his shoes and stockings, which he had left some distance from the bed, were now charred embers. He had nothing left in the world but the extraordinary night-garments in which he sat in that moment. I pointed out his loss to him. He said that he had observed it, but it made no difference. He could get more easily from his couisn.

'What will you wear when you go to your cousin?' asked I. 'Garments of mine or—this?'

At that he laughed, but his laugh turned into a cry, and little Ah Choon went into as genuine a fit of hysterics as any fine lady could have managed.

No pleadings of mine availed: Ah Choon was dismissed. There was a tear in his eye when I shook his little claw and said good-by, and there was a tear in mine.

Sometime afterward I heard bad accounts from my washman of Ah Choon's subsequent career. He got a place with a rich lady who was in the habit of keeping several hundred dollars at a time in her desk. Ah Choon took a wax impression from the lock, made a key to it, and after abstracting four hundred dollars set out for China, where he is now in full enjoyment of his vast and ill-gotten riches.

'I am indeed surprised,' I remarked to the washman; 'he was such an honest boy with me.'

'Oh, he likee you,' replied the washman; 'he no takee you money. Too muchee sass, sass, he takee money, lun away. Welly bad,' he adeed as an after-thought.

Our next boy, Ah Hoon, stayed but a short time; he called me mamma, and after some pressing upon the subject told us that the Chinese tag he placed upon the clothes when they when to the wash might be translated, 'Ah Hoon's mamma.' When not asleep he spent all his spare moments bathing in a big washtub.

Owing to general illness in the family, I being an invalid myself at the time, and the management of affairs out of my hands, it was deemed advisable by the powers in authority to bring in an Irishwoman to help with the housework. Ah Hoon's indignation was intense; he went about the house sullen and silent for several days Taking advantage of a moment when I was alone, he burst into my room with his valise and bedclothes. 'Too many bossee-women in this house!' he cried. 'I go away. You look see I no steal. You bossee-woman; you look see. Bym-by I go way. Ilish woman mebbe stealee spoon, stealee money; go say China boy stealee. Look see!' and he shook out each article violently, turned the valise upside down, packed everything back again, refused to receive his wages, and walked off, leaving his sheets and blankets beside my bed.

Then for a wearisome time there was a clanging of pans and clashing of pottery and trampling of heavy feet that betokened the presence of the ordinary servant-girl, two of whom were found requisite to fill the place of my one little light-footed, nimble-fingered heathen. How gladly would I have given him wax impressions of all my locks in return for his dexterous manipulation of the household machinery!

As soon as I was well enough to receive into my own hands again the reins of government, I made a clean sweep in my kitchen, and installed a new China boy, Ah Gim by name, instead of the women I sent away.

Ah Gim was fourteen years old.—thirteen, according to our count. The Chinese reckon the year they enter as the year of their age, instead of, as we do, the year that is accomplished He was a slender, pretty, very graceful boy, with a face of more refinement than one usually sees in the lower classes of his race.

Unlike Ah Choon, he was an extremely timid boy, and never ventured very far from the house unless I went with him; consequently, when Ah Gim needed a new pair of stockings or a handkerchief I had to go with him to the town, where he made his purchasas.

Ah Gim was much more of a fine gentleman than his predecessors, and was greatly flattered that I should perceive it and ask him what caused the difference. He, he informed me, was a schoolmaster's son, and had been educated with great care and never allawed to associate with vulgar people. He looked upon 'Christian Charley,' a boy who had been converted and was made a great pet of, with all possible contempt. Charley was so ignorant said Ah Gim, that he didn't even understand his own religion, or he would have seen that it was almost the same as that to which he pretended to be converted. He explained his own religious belief to me at great length, saying that it was very like Catholicism. 'We are all called idolaters,' said he, 'because a few of us really are. But why should we be despised for idolatry and called heathen, any more than the ignorant among Catholics, who pray to images of the Virgin and to the cross in as idolatrous a spirit as any poor Chinaman prays before his joss? To us educated Chinamen our gods are merely symbols, which we use just as the Catholics do theirs,' etc. This is not given in Ah Gim's own language, which, however, was greatly superior in construction and pronunciation to that of any other Chinaman I have known, except, of course, Chinese gentlemen.

Ah Gim did his work in the deft, quick way that is characteristic of the Chinese servant, at the same time adding manylittle refinements of his own. He always kept a newly-plucked rose in a glass on the shelf of his kitchen-sink, taking whiffs of its fragrance as he washed his dishes. The bowls of the kerosene-lamps had rose-leaves strewn in them, and all the vases in the house were kept filled with fresh flowers and water. He objected to the pony, fearing the smell of the stable might cling to his clothes, and refused to associate with the Chinese servants in the neighborhood, because their manners were vulgar.

Like most fine gentlemen, Ah Gim had superfine feelings which were easily wounded. Being too dignified to mention the fact when we had unwittingly injured his feelings, and yet desirous that we should not languish in ignorance, he had a curious custom, coming sometimes at awkward seasons of flattening his face against the wall and remaining rigid for a longer or shorter period according to the turpitude of the offence. When this happened during the preparation of dinner or while waiting upon the table, it was productive of unpleasant feeling. I said nothing at first, but waited until Ah Gim wanted to go to the city to do some shopping. As usual, he came to ask me to accompany him, at which I flattened myself against the wall and said nothing. The subject was dropped at once, and Ah Gim stole sheepishly away. After several days he took courage to speak again about going to the city, and again I promptly and silently took his position against the wall. This went on until he voluntarily promised to abstain from all flattening and sulks in the future, and I had no more trouble with him on that score.

Being too proud to associate with his fellow-servants, the poor boy had very dull evenings. Like most of the boys I have had, he spent a great part of his time in study, both in Chinese and English. But when he was tired or had finished his self-imposed tasks, time hung heavily upon his hands. It was a great pleasure to him then, when I was alone, to be allowed to come in and talk to me He asked many questions about the government and politics of America, some of which puzzled and many embarrassed me to answer, so that I was glad to shift the talk into other channels. But what I liked even more—shall I confess it?—than the conversation of my wittiest friends, was to listen to Ah Gim when he stood before me (he refused to sit in my presence,) his little brown hands crossed upon his breast, his head thrown back, his eyes shining a narrow oblique line between his partly-closed lids, and recited what I might call the folk-lore of his country. His countenance remained impassive throughout, and his position never changed, but his voice thrilled and vibrated with the passion and the terror or the pathos of his story.

I shall never, never find another China boy like Ah Gim. And I lost him by what foolishness, do you suppose? By the deadly insult of requiring him to use a fine-tooth comb. He had given his word not to flatten, so there was nothing for it but to shake hands and say good-by.

After my experience with Ah Gim, my first proposition to a new boy was the use of the comb or its equivalent If he refused, well and good; the bargain was off. If he consented, my heart was glad, for then there was less likelihood of coming to a rupture with a good boy after I had grown to like him and he had become familiar with the ways of the house. (Let me whisper to strangers about to engage Chinese servants that it is the safe thing to compel a new boy, no matter how neat and clean he may appear, to wash his head in a solution of fish-berries and alcohol or larkspur-seeds boiled in water, remembering that both are a deadly poison when swallowed.)

My next venture was called Ah Sin, a bright, dapper lad of fourteen, of a facetious turn of mind and a merry most musical laugh. I took him down to Monterey with me for the summer, where we lived in a little rose-embowered adobe cottage with two Spanish ladies, Senora Bonifacio and the lovely little senorita her daughter. Between the Senora and Ah Sin war was at once declared. An indignant outburst of Spanish would startle me as I sat drawing at the window, and I would hasten out to find the senora, one hand clutching the shawl over her head, gesticulating with the other as she volubly explained that she would not and could not allow the 'Chinito' to climb upon her garden-wall and fasten his clothesline to her favorite pear tree, thereby shaking off the unripe fruit. The more emphatic the old lady grew, the more Ah Sin's expression become that of one serenely meditating upon far-away scenes, while the knots of his rope were drown tighter as his abstraction become deeper. When I insisted that the rope should be removed, he smiled and undid it, but as soon as my back was turned found some other means of attaining his object. He seemed entirely unaware of the Senora's evistence, and skipped about her whistling 'Baby Mine' and dodging under her arms as though he supposed her some ordinary vegetable production sprouting from her own garden

The senora kept all gates securely locked, especially the door in the garden wall, which was strictly tabooed to Ah Sin; but no locks or bars interfered with his incomings and outgoings. Whether he said, Open, sesam!' in Chinese or had made himself a private key I do not know, but he smilingly came and went at his own sweet will.

During work hours, while the machinery of the house was in motion, Ah Sin went about with the air of a man of serious responsibilities; but, the dinner well under way, everything polished and in order, he rolled up his white apron—and his cares with it—and ran out into the garden for a romp with little Sam. The air rang with their gleeful shouts as they wrestled and pelted each other with fallen pears and and played ball and other games dear to the heart of boys. One of their amusements consist d in practising with a rifle, with which Ah Sin became so expert that he could shoot a bird on the wing.

Sam had a pony. It had long been a dream of Ah Sin's to have a ride behind Sam on his 'little horsey.' I gave them permission one morning to go riding double to gather wild strawberaies in fields, Ah Sin providing himself with a grain sack to carry the fruit in. Late in the afternoon I found him hiding the empty sack. He was greatly mortified at having made such a public display which ended in so poor a fiasco, for they had not found a single berry, and, as Ah Sin confessed to me a few days after, horseback-riding was not all his fancy had painted it. 'Little horsey,' said he, 'jimp, jimp, jimp; I jimp, jimp, jimp; one week allee time stand up: no can sit down.'

At this time there were two young ladies in the family. Naturally, gentlemen from the city were found of hunting in the hills about Monterey. We found afterward that all strangers were met by confidential disclosures from the Chinaboy as to the young ladies' affections. 'Missee Belle, he would say, 'she welly muchee likee Melican painter man; pletty soon she mally him; she no mally you. Missee Nelly she mally Spanishee man; bym-by she get plenty key, lockee, lockee door; tie up bread allee same senora.' His delicacy in the presence of the supposed lovers was extreme. If the exigencies of the situation forced him to turn his body toward them, it moved under his head as though working upon a pivot, so that the queue invariably faced them.

In the evening, when all the rest were drawn away by the fascinations of cascarone-parties, moonlight rides, or strolls upon the beach, Ah Sin came in to make my fire, at which I liked to sit for an hour or two in the gloaming. He squatted upon his haunches like some sort of a curious frog about to jump, laying one splinter after another upon the fire as he watched my face furtively to see if I was in the mood to allow a little talk. If my expression happened to be reassuring, I was entertained by full accounts of his family affairs—of how a wife had been bought for him while he was still an infant in arms; he was sure his future spouse would be all he could desire, as his mother, who had bargained for her, was a wise woman and not likely to make a bad choice He spoke with scorn of having seen 'Melican, boys talking and even walking in the street with girls. 'I tlun my head away,' he said, 'and no look at gul; walkee light on; no lockee, no lookee.' In the part of China from whence he came, he said, all the boys of fourteen and over were sent to a large building, where they lived together. Sometimes he confessed, there were fights and disturbances and rough and noisy play but that was better than being exposed to the baleful influence of woman.

'If you went home now,' I asked, 'would your mother be very glad to see you and you to see her?'

'Oh, yes,' said he. 'No kiss, no hug. I stand here, she stand way off, and then talkee, talkee—plenty talkee. Bym-by no let my muddah work. I gettee one wifee, I make her work for muddah. Melican boy he gettee one wifee, no likee muddah then. Likee wifee welly much, no likee muddah now. Welly bad, that!'

Ah Sin's religious belief differed from that of Ah Gim. When I told him what Ah Gim had said on the subject, he cried. 'He talkee one lie! No allee same that. I welly bad man, I die, I get one pig; meb e I get one lat (rat.) I welly good, welly smlat (smart) man, I get one big snake. Bym-by snake die, he go up allee same god. Bad lat, he die, he get one lilly wum (worm;) lilly wum he die, go down big hole.'

'What do you want to be after you die?' I asked.

'Me?' I likee get one big snake; then everybody muchee flaid. I makee big wind blow hard; muchee likee that.'

For one thing he preferred white people to Chinese. They never, he said made devils. The process of 'making devils' he explained as follows: 'One man welly poor, lend money to fiend. Poor man he die, he say give money my muddah; he fiend no give money muddah. Poor man be die, he makee devil. He fiend plenty flaid He no pay money to muddah; bym-by he get too muchee flaid, he hap-die. Man-devil makee him die.'

He spoke of the present ill-feeling of the Irish toward his race with surprising intelligence and moderation. The Irish, he said, were slow to learn, extravagant in their habits, inclined to drunkenness, and most of them unskilled laborers. They refuse to do the work they are capable of doing, and always demand the highest wages. Now and then among them, he said, were good and clever men, but the most of them came to this country with exaggerated ideas of its freedom and wealth, only to meet with disappointment.

'You look see!' he said. 'Ilishman he hap thlee (three-) corner eyes, he bad man. Plenty Ilishman hap got thlee-corner eyes. Spanishee man sometimes he get thlee-corner eyes allee same; he bad man.'

Drunkenness, he said could be easily cured, though he had unfortunately forgotten the remedy. His brother had developed at an early age a strong appetite for drink. His mother, when she discovered it, simply went out into the fields, gathered an herb, made her son drink the tea from it, and the cure was soon complete. Could it be, I wondered, the new remedy for dipsomania—red Peruvian bark—accounts of which had been going the rounds of the papers?

After a time Ah Sin's merry laugh was hushed The singing and whistling in the kitchen of Chinese songs (so curiously similar to Methodist hymns, American street-songs, and bits of operas caught from the young ladies—for he had a quick and correct ear—were heard no more. He fell back in his work; the romps in the garden were at an end. One evening he poured out his heart to Miss Nelly. He had fallen in with a bad set, who had enticed him into gambling. He had not only lost all the savings that had been meant for his mother, but was in debt besides. The bad influences about him he felt too strong to resist. There was no salvation for him, he thought, but in leaving Monterey entirely. He waited until we found his successor, breaking off from his work every few minutes to hold long farewell conversations with the cats, telling them how 'too muchee solly' he was to leave them.

The new boy came, and Ah Sin went, regretted by all. See Yung came from the country; I engaged him from his brother, a very valuable man on a dairy-farm. See Yung was not so prepossessing in appearance or manner as Ah Sin, but I came to feel very kindly toward him, he was so gentle and docile, so invariably good-natured and so affectionate toward animals and children. Most servants, after dinner has been eaten and the table cleared and they are sitting in their own rooms resting from the toils of the day, look with considerable distavor on visitors who appear at eight o'clock dinnerless. This often happened at our house, and See Yung prepared the second dinner with as smiling a countenance as though he were one of the guests himself. Yet there seemed to be always a touch of patnos in his smile; the expression of it was that of a dog fond of a master who abuses him.

Of all my boys, See Yung, though the most stupid, was the closest student. Alongside his bed stood his ink, his writing-brush and books, as well as his English reader, pen and paper. I never sat down a moment alone in the evening but a stealthy step crept up beside me and a soft, meek voice hesitatingly asked, 'Teachee me now?'

See Yung had probably brought some malaria in his system from the Carmello Valley. He was taken with an ague-chill. As soon as the fever went down, I gave him a large quinine pill which I desired him to take.

'Bym-by,' was his reply.

A few minutes after, I heard a rustle on the stairs. I was just in time to prevent See Yung's precipitate retreat; the sight of 'Melican man's medicine' had frightened him more than the chill. He still held the pill in his hand. I sternly ordered him to sit in a chair and open his mouth. In a tremor of agitation he dropped into the chair, threw back his head and opened his mouth; down went the pill. He opened his eyes, gave me one reproachful glance, and fled the house. The second day after he walked through the kitchen and into my room, seated himself upon the same spot, in the same chair, and solemnly said, 'Welly good pill; likee cap more allee same,' threw back his head, shut his eyes, and opened his mouth. I had mislaid the box, and hunted for some time before I found it, but See Yung never moved a muscle until I popped the pill down his throat, when he said, 'Thank you,' and went about his work again. He doubtless looked upon the magical pill as a preservative of health as well as a cure for disease, for he took position at the same hour every day and waited for his pill until I showed him the empty box, which he viewed with the deepest dejection.

Suddenly and unexpectedly it became necessary to break up our little establishment. No one had the courage to tell the news to See Yung. At last circumstances became so imperative that I was forced to do it. No words of mine can describe the awful depression that enveloped him like the folds of a pall as the full meaning of my words dawned upon him. He said nothing, and I could say no more; but I felt as Cain must have done after he had killed Abel.

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.

TELEPHONES.

The telephone is growing dangerously threatening to the old jog-trot institutions of the past, and while Titusville witnesses may soon be able to lay in bed and give their evidence in Meadville, or, for that matter, anywhere else, the whole system of going to church to hear sermons, seems likely to be revolutionized.

For the sick a boon is offered by this innovation that was little dreamed of a few years ago. Here is an illustration of its working, with unlimited suggestions of its future possibilities.

For some time past Mrs. D. O. Wickham has been confined to the house by serious indisposition, and a few days ago Mr. George Coburn hurriedly put up a telephone in the Presbyterian Church. He hardly thought it would work as he had so little time to see the instrument thoroughly adjusted, but on Sunday evening we dropped, for a moment, into the Central office, and there by the courtesy of Mr. Coburn, had the pleasure of hearing, very distinctly, the clear delivery of the Rev. J. A. Maxwell in his sermon, while the fine duets and solos of the choir were very plainly heard.

Later in the evening, we were informed that Mrs. Wickman, the lady for whom the church telephone had been placed, had enjoyed the sermon, catching every word of it very distinctly at her own residence. It is to be hoped, however, that people in perfect health will not avail themselves of this luxury to avoid the collection plate. Friends will please take this hint in any way they choose.—*Titusville Herald.*

DEALING WITH THIEVES.

A man having bought some wool of him, which he had weighed and paid for, Mr. Sheaf went into the back room to get change for a note. Happening to turn his head while there he saw in a glass, which hung so as to reflect the shop, a stout arm reached up and take from a shelf a heavy cheese. Instead of appearing suddenly and rebuking the man for the theft, as another would have done, thereby losing his custom forever, the crafty old gentleman gave the thief his change, as if nothing had happened, and then under pretense of lifting the bag to lay it on the horse for him, he took hold of it, and—

'Why bless me, I have reckoned the weight wrong.'

'O, no,' said the other, 'you may be sure you have not, for I counted with you.'

'Well, we won't dispute about the matter, it is so easily tried,' said Mr. S. putting the bag on the scales again. 'There,' said he, 'I told you so; I knew I was right; made a mistake of nearly twenty pounds. However, if you don't want the whole, you needn't have it; I'll take part out.'

'No,' said the other staying the hands of Mr. S. on the way to the strings of the bag, 'I guess I'll take the whole.'

And this he did, paying for dishonesty by receiving the skim milk cheese at the price of wool.

On another occasion, Mr. S. missed a barrel of pork. A few months after a man asked the question:

'Did you ever find out who took that pork, Mr. Sheaf?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'you are the fellow, for none but myself and the thief knew of the loss.'

SCREWS AND CAN CAPS.

A few days since the cook came to us with a glass can of peaches, the cap of which was screwed on so tight that a strong man had been unable to unscrew it We directed that a cloth dipped in hot water be applied to the outside of the cap, to cause expansion by the heat. This was done and it so effectually loosened the cap that it came off with no effort. We have tried this principle on many other occasions. The ground stoppers of bottles sometimes are found immovably fast. In this case the heat must be applied to the neck of the bottle, so as to increase its size and leave the stopper loosened within it.

Care should always be taken that the ground stopper when inserted is not colder than the bottle neck, for if it is you will have trouble. It will expand when it becomes as warm as the bottle and be effectually fastened. In one case we had employed a horse-power to saw wood, the weather being quite cold, one of the workmen had occasion to take off a screw, and after holding it long enough in his hand to warm and expand it, he placed it again without thinking on the screw and turned it firmly down. It contracted in cooling with powerful grasp, so that no wrench could stir it until a red hot iron was applied to the nut to restore its size. In all these attempts the right space of time must be given to heat the nut or stopper, without heating the part which it touches, which requires some judgment. The metalic can-caps will heat sooner than the bottle neck.