

AT A JAPANESE HOTEL.

TAKE THE SHOES OFF TO GO THROUGH THE HOUSE.

What the Hostelry Is Like and How Its Doors and Windows are Made. The Dinner — Chopsticks, But No Knives and Forks—A Position Showing Respect.

We came to the front of a hotel, a long two-story building, but are immediately at a loss as to where the entrance is, for all the lower floor—front, sides, and rear—is open, there not being a single evidence of either door or window anywhere.

A number of rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed girls are smiling and curtseying to us, and we make bold to smile in return, and to say "Hello," the usual Japanese salutation, says a writer in the New York "Dispatch."

No one walks about a Japanese house with shoes on, for the floors are covered with several thicknesses of fine matting laid down in regular rectangles about six feet long by three feet wide, and you cannot imagine how soft and easy they are to walk on. We take off our shoes, and are permitted to go all through the house.

The framework and floors of this house are of pine, which has been stained and polished. The two floors are shut off from the outside, and also divided into numerous apartments by wooden lattice-work screens, neatly covered with white rice paper, and made to slide in grooves in such a manner as to thoroughly open the entire house. With this arrangement doors and windows are unnecessary.

When all the screens are closed, to go from one room to another, we simply slide one of the intervening screens aside. If we only want to look out of doors we slide back a little of the wall, but if we want to go out we slide back an entire screen. A very simple arrangement, but one which is not at all conducive to comfort in cold weather.

A few of the kakemonos hang on the side screens, but there is no other furniture in these rooms. We see ourselves in a part facing the garden, and by means of a pocket dictionary succeed in ordering dinner, three neat looking men having taken it upon themselves to wait on us. They did not hesitate to show us where our dinner was being cooked, but we cannot begin to describe how neat and clean we found everything to be.

After a while they bring each of us a lacquer tray, on which is a lacquer bowl containing hot water, in which is a morsel of fish, seaweed and shrimps, another bowl containing sweet cakes and a dish of dalkon—a large kind of radish, which sometimes attains a length of several feet, and of which the Japs are very fond. Unfortunately it smells very much like rotten eggs, and we cannot bring ourselves to eat it. With all this each one of us is given a pair of chopsticks, and how the young men do laugh over our awkward efforts to use them. Knives and forks are unknown luxuries to these people.

Several courses follow this one, consisting of eggs, fried fish, spinach, sweet potatoes, and chickens boiled in hot water, and finally a large lacquer box of rice, from which we fill small lacquer bowls to eat from. After this a cup of simply hot water, poured into tiny cups, in which were a few tea leaves, and our dinner is a thing of the past. How the men did enjoy our frantic struggles with our chopsticks during each course, and how pleasant and smiling they were during our entire stay we find difficulty in expressing.

When not engaged in bringing the various courses, or in waiting upon us, they remained seated on the matting floor in the customary Japanese position of respect, that is—with the knees and toes touching the floor and the body resting on the heels, a rather painful position for a foreigner.

The World's Tallest Chimney.
The tallest chimney in the country is the new stack of the Clark Thread company, at Kearney, near Newark, N. J. It is a circular shaft 335 feet high and 28 1/2 feet in diameter at the base. This chimney cost \$30,000 and contains 1,697,000 bricks. It was finished in September last. Its supremacy among American chimneys will be brief, for one is now being erected for the Fall River iron works company, in Fall River, Mass., that will be 340 feet high and 30 feet in diameter at the base. Chicago's highest chimney is 330 feet tall.

American chimneys, however, are mere pygmies beside some of the Scotch and English stacks. The great Townsend stack at Glasgow, the tallest in the world, is 454 feet high and 32 feet in diameter at the base. Tennant & Co., of Glasgow, have a chimney 435 1/2 feet high, and the mills of Dobson & Barlow, Bolton, England, have an octagonal stack 367 1/2 feet high and 38 feet 10 inches in diameter at the bottom.—Philadelphia Record.

English Insanity Statistics.
In the forty-third annual report of the commissioners in lunacy, just issued, it is stated that there are 84,319 insane persons under restraint. Of these, 7,970 were of the private class, 75,632 were paupers, and 728 were criminals. The commissioners believe that during recent years medical men have become increasingly unwilling to certify to the insanity of persons requiring treatment. In consequence of the results of recent litigation connected with this part of their duties.

The causes of insanity are set forth in a table covering 136,478 cases. These are very diverse. Thus 9,569 persons lost their reason from domestic trouble, 8,000 from adverse circumstances, 6,275 from overwork and worry, 5,770 from religious excitement, and 5,620 from intemperance. The influence of heredity was ascertained in 28,821 cases, and congenital defect in 5,881.—London Standard.

California Mud Springs.
The mud springs or volcanoes of California in the southern part of the state, in the valley of the Tula river. The country there is principally an alkaline desert, and it is supposed that the mud was once submerged by the sea. The mud springs or volcanoes are in a circular area of about half an acre, depressed several feet below the surrounding land, and supposed to be the bed of a salt lake left by the retreating gulf. Here there are numerous little cones, three or four feet in height, of soft earth, from which there is a constant discharge of carbonic acid and hydro-sulphuric acid gas.

These cones after a time sink into the earth and new ones are thrown up. The mud volcanoes are very hot, their temperature standing at 125 degrees F. in the summer time.

One part of alum with two parts of glycerine, rubbed on the feet at night will cure excessive perspiration of those members. A light open sock may be worn. In the feet should be washed with tepid water.

THE GREAT PLAGUE.

A Terrible Disease which Baffled Medical Skill During Three Centuries.
The Great Plague, which attacked Europe at intervals during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was a very contagious kind of malignant fever, probably nearly akin to what is now known as typhus, and was characterized by swellings of the lymphatic glands, purple spots, and carbuncles. It was a popular belief that persons who had survived one attack of the disease were not liable to another; but that this was quite groundless is proved by well authenticated cases of individuals taking the infection several times.

The first signs of pestilence were shivering, sickness, giddiness and pains in the loins, accompanied by a feeling of intense weariness; in the second stage the tongue became dry and brown, the gums, teeth and lips were covered with a dark fur, and livid patches and dark stripes made their appearance on the skin. In fatal cases the pulse gradually sank, the surface of the body became clammy, and coma or low delirium set in, death usually occurring within five or six days of the first seizure.

This disease has always been confined to temperate regions, and has been most fatal in summer and autumn, especially during the month of September. That it is largely due to dirty habits and bad sanitary arrangements is evident from the fact that its greatest ravages were in close, ill-drained towns; as sanitation has progressed the plague has receded. Its last and most fatal outbreak in England was in 1665, when London suffered so severely that business was practically at a stand-still. Every street, and in some cases every house in the street, was attacked, and more than 25,000 died in the month of September alone, while the total loss cannot have been far short of 100,000 persons. For such large numbers ordinary burial was impossible, and the dead had to be carted away coffinless and thrown into vast pits dug beyond the then existing walls.

In 1720 the plague destroyed nearly half the population of Marseilles, and seventy years later it raged with great virulence in Russia and Poland. Since that date, however, it has never visited Western Europe, though it still appears in Greece and Turkey, and occasionally in Russia.—Exchange.

The Black Death.
This disease is believed to have originated in China, and took its name from the black spots which usually appeared on the person of the sufferer. These spots were symptomatic of putrid decomposition, and their appearance was nearly always a fatal sign. Beginning with inflammatory boils and tumors, the black death produced stupor, mental affliction and palsy of the tongue, the patient generally becoming black, as if suffused with blood. The characteristic of the disease were burning, unquenchable thirst, pains in the chest, spitting of blood, and fetid breath.

This pestilence attacked Europe in a mild form in 1342 and may be traced as moving in the wake of the numerous caravan routes from the east, spreading from the north coast of the Black sea to Constantinople, and thence to Italy, it radiated from there by many routes over the whole of Europe. Wherever it appeared it committed such fearful ravages as materially to check the increase of population; in China also a deathly pestilence was estimated at \$13,000,000, and the rest of the east lost nearly 24,000,000, while a moderate calculation puts the loss at 100,000 inhabitants each; and Paris, Florence, and Norwich half that number apiece.

It caused so serious a decrease of population in England for a time as to create a great dearth of workmen, and in consequence a rise in the wages. Professor Theobald Mudge, who has investigated the economic bearings of this disease very thoroughly, states that the working classes were at no time so well off in England as during the period which immediately followed the ravages of the black death in the fourteenth century. It is never known to have made its appearance since then.—Chamber's Journal.

Underground Water in Australia.
The future of Australia for the next thirty years will rest with the engineers. The recent discoveries of underground rivers in the most arid portions of the continent have given those words a greater significance. The difficulty of Australia has always been the fact that the land will not support a large population. These discoveries of water dispel this fear.

It now appears that the volumes of rain which fall about once in five years over the greater part of the Australian continent, covering with floods the plains which for four years previously have not known one moisture than might be obtained in England by a good fall of rain; that water through the porous soil into channels and chambers beneath the surface, where, at a depth of one or two thousand feet, they provide an inexhaustible store of the most precious commodity known to the Australian squatter.

It is impossible to say at present how the use of these underground supplies of water may change the face of the Australian continent. The overflow from one bore at a place called Kerrikerri, has already cut a channel of several feet in depth through the sand, and now forms a permanent river of several miles in length in what used to be an absolutely waterless country. It is only to be expected that as more water is brought to the surface the clouds will take up more moisture by evaporation and the rainfall will increase. Then, with regular rainfall and inexhaustible tanks and creeks, even the Australian squatter might begin to be contented.—Macmillan's Magazine.

Financial Backing.
A writer in the Boston "Budget" witnessed a little street scene the other day, which is a worthy commentary upon Seneca's noble saying, "Man is born for mutual assistance." The best kind of a friend is one that encourages our good humors.

Two unkempt newsboys were on their way toward the newspaper center to begin their afternoon's work, when, passing beside the box which is placed in front of a clothing house, one of them said to his companion "Say, Billy, let's put something in the box for the Johnsons' sufferers."

"I'll like 'er," was the response, "but I'm afraid if I don't have luck I'll get whaled when I go home 'thout the money."

"No, you won't, neither," was the reply, "if you get busted I'll set yer up."

Upon this the two gamins stealthily deposited their mite and resumed their course toward the scene of their afternoon's labors.

She Won't Have Time.
Wife, to husband as they are about to start on a summer excursion—Will I have time to run across the street to mother's to bid her good-bye?
Husband, consulting his watch—I'm afraid not, dear. The carriage will be here for us in an hour and a half sharp.—Boston Courier.

INTO A PILLAR OF FIRE.

A MINING EXPERT FACES DEATH SO EARLY \$1,000.

William H. Marvin's Hazardous Attempt to Remove the Caps of a Burning Gas Well—Covered with Asbestos and Wet Cloths, He Succeeded, but Suffers Terribly in the Effort.

Some few days ago the Kuffner, Ontario, gas well was set afire, it is supposed, by some disgruntled laborer. The cap over the top of the pipe was so fixed that the escaping gas rushed out directly toward the ground and made safe approach impossible. The roar could be heard in Kingsville, three miles away.

Local mechanics found it impossible to remove the cap. The heat was simply unendurable and grew worse every day. Gas experts from Ohio were called to the scene, but they, too, gave it up. The ground around the well became baked and when workmen tried to cool it with a stream from a fire engine the water went up in a cloud of steam before it had fairly struck the ground. All idea of cooling off the ground was given up. The owners of the well offered \$1,000 to any one who would remove the cap.

William H. Marvin, a mining expert, who had some acquaintance with natural gas, undertook the job. He tried several schemes for removing the cap by aid of a long lever, but they all failed, for the reason that his lever would melt away under the fierce heat as soon as he got it near enough to work. He determined to go near the well himself and cut off the cap. It looked like certain death for any one to approach the well, and even the owner advised Marvin to give up the idea. He made a suit of asbestos that was unique in its way. It was his purpose to go right up to the well, through the gas flame, and place a cold chisel against the pipe while his assistant pounded on the chisel until the cap gave way.

The first attempt was a signal failure. Marvin only reached the flame, when he retreated. He had worn a heavy pair of cowhide boots, covered with wet cloths, and before he got to the flame the cloths had dried and burned away, and his boots were half burned off. So great was his hurry to escape that he dropped his cutting contrivance and was dismayed to see it get red hot before his eyes. For his next trial he wore a pair of rubber boots and a pair of trousers, and before he got to the flame the cloths had dried and burned away, and his boots were half burned off. So great was his hurry to escape that he dropped his cutting contrivance and was dismayed to see it get red hot before his eyes. For his next trial he wore a pair of rubber boots and a pair of trousers, and before he got to the flame the cloths had dried and burned away, and his boots were half burned off. So great was his hurry to escape that he dropped his cutting contrivance and was dismayed to see it get red hot before his eyes.

His contrivance for cutting the pipe consisted of a long and very sharp chisel, fastened at right angles to an iron staff. In approaching the well he slid the cone along the ground, seeing his way through a glass set in the front. His assistant was roiled like himself and carried a long iron bar, on which was fastened a small farrier's hammer. Two hundred people saw the feat, and the men made the noise of the flame, and as Marvin disappeared in its circle a shudder swept over the on-lookers. There were not a half dozen in the crowd that expected to see Marvin come out alive, but in a second that seemed like an age they saw the edge of the chisel resting up against the pipe, just below the cap. Almost breathlessly they watched the assistant make a stroke at the chisel in a clumsy kind of a way. He did not hit it. The second trial was more successful; he hit the chisel squarely but lightly. The cone in the ring of fire wavered and a cry of "He's burned to death" went up on all sides. The cone moved again, the chisel fell and the people could see that Marvin was coming out.

Everybody thought that he had given up in sheer despair, but not so. He had come out of the fire to get rest and air. He was nearly suffocated. When the cone was lifted off Marvin, for he was too weak to lift it off himself, he was a sight to behold. His face was soot black, his eyes protruded like door knobs. He was half roasted and it took him two hours to recover. Then he pluckily determined to try it again. His cone was thoroughly wet and he fixed up another chisel, saying, as the cone was put over him, that he would succeed or never come out alive.

The crowd cheered him and then watched him approach certain success of death. Again the hammer and chisel were brought into play, and little by little the people could see that the man's skill and pluck would win. All at once the roar of the well changed to a shrill whistle, and the cap was blown 100 feet upward, while Marvin's cone stood at the foot of the pipe motionless. It was some minutes before it moved and the people thought again that he had perished in his attempt. His assistant was badly burned and had to be taken to the hotel for assistance. When Marvin's cone began to move the people sent up a tremendous shout and the more nature some minutes before it moved and the people thought again that he had perished in his attempt. His assistant was badly burned and had to be taken to the hotel for assistance. When Marvin's cone began to move the people sent up a tremendous shout and the more nature some minutes before it moved and the people thought again that he had perished in his attempt. His assistant was badly burned and had to be taken to the hotel for assistance.

Marvin had earned his \$1,000. He put a contrivance on the pipe to shut off the flow of gas, and now nothing is quiet from the deafening roar. Marvin's cap is shaped like the letter T, and was placed on the pipe after three trials. The company estimate that over 11,000,000 feet of gas has been consumed each day. Marvin said that it was the nearest to death he ever expected to be until his time came. "Every breath," he said, "seemed to burn like fire, and twice I nearly fainted. My mouth was so parched that I could not swallow. The suffering was dreadful and I would not pass through the experience again for fifty times \$1,000. This time, however, I was bound to win. Despite my covering, my body is blistered in several places and my hands and arms are one mass of burns. My eyes are burned as if I had them in the fire."

A Polish Hero's Feat.
At an election in Poland the other day a young candidate tried a non-vote which almost proved to succeed for its ingenuity. So long did the peasants were against him, and the problem was how to prevent them from voting. The interval is very short between the time when they leave off work and the closing of the polls, so that at the last half hour a great crowd was waiting. Suddenly there was a cry of "fire" and a rattling of engines. But the ruse did not succeed, the stolid countrymen first waiting to record their vote, and then hurrying off to discuss the conflagration.

Already Related.
"No, Mr. Jones, I cannot be your wife."
"But you'll be a sister to me, promise me that."
"It is unnecessary. Your brother proposed to me last week and I promised to be his sister. I have been your sister for a week."—Boston Courier.

RAGS, RAGS, RAGS.

No Money in Rag Picking, But a Healthy Business as Any.

A prominent rag dealer says when business is so bad that the dealer can hardly make both ends meet, God only knows how the pickers manage to get along. All the life they lead is something terrible. Theirs is one continual striving to get enough to keep body and soul together. No man will remain at picking rags unless he be a drunken bum or too old to do any manual labor. The majority of the rag pickers are the poor Jews who land in this country by the hundreds annually. They are the only class of people that can live on what they earn by buying and selling rags.

These people can live on ten or fifteen cents a day. Their homes are on the top floors of crowded tenements. Here they are crowded together like so many swine. He has been in the rag and paper business all his life, and is thoroughly conversant with the life of a rag picker. Several years ago they were able to make anywhere from \$10 to \$20 a week. Then rags were selling for 2 and 3 cents a pound. This has been cut down so that the rag picker is glad to get sixty or seventy cents a hundred. Many of the pickers have given up their trade, or profession, as some of them are pleased to term their employment, and taken to the road—tramping.

The rag picker to earn five or six dollars a week must travel a considerable distance and trudge from morning till night and the peddlers, those who have horses and wagons make very little more. If they make any big money it is by buying stolen goods or during the months of April and May when the business receives quite a boom. During house cleaning time the rag pickers are frequently given the rubbish for hauling it away. People are glad to get their places cleaned up and their rag-bags emptied. Since the introduction of natural gas, the rag business has increased.

The pickers in the city do little trading, as their customers are not so easily duped as the country people, and they do not have to quibble over a cent or two, a good many rags are sent into the city from the country grocery stores, most of which are taken in exchange for goods. This class of rags finds ready sale. The profits are not large, but they are usually so well assorted that there is little or no expense attached in the dealer handling them. The business is not what it used to be, but there is still a little margin in buying and selling. It is not the cleanest business in the world, but, notwithstanding the fact that it is about as healthy an occupation as one can engage in.—N. Y. Dispatch.

The Plain Princess of Wales.
The Princess Louise is the plainest of the three daughters of the Prince of Wales, and that is saying a good deal; also, if one can judge of her mental qualities by her expression, she is a remarkably stupid young lady. She is dull and heavy looking, with loose, thick lips and usually goes about with her mouth open in a vacant kind of way. She appeared recently at the Grand Opera in Paris with her two sisters and mother. All four ladies were dressed in white, the three girls in simple but tasteful toilettes of white satin, and the Princess of Wales in white satin trimmed in lace, and positively the charming mother looked scarcely older than her daughters and infinitely prettier. The Princess Maud, the youngest of the three girls, has a bright, animated countenance, and is much more attractive than her sisters. She is the favorite sister of her younger brother, Prince George, whom she resembles in character and disposition.

She is a spry little girl with a will of her own, and when the time comes for the betrothal of her hand she will have something to say, undoubtedly, concerning the choice of her bridegroom. In the days before the princesses had been introduced into society she was the only one of the three who used to fight vigorously, though vainly, against the peculiarly hideous garments, the cotton gowns and beading caps and such like elegances, which the Princess of Wales used to inflict upon her daughters. The second daughter, the Princess Victoria, is plain and stupid-looking like her elder sister.

\$8.50 for Writing a Successful Novel.
The average novel does not pay the author for his trouble, and often does not cover the typewriter's bill. I know of two recent novels says a writer in the "Boston Journal," upon which each of the authors spent the best part of a year in writing and revising. Both novels are, according to the popular acceptance of the term, successful—that is, they have been widely written about, paraphrased in the press from one end of the country to another. English editions have been printed of each, and to every literary person the names of both novels and authors are thoroughly familiar.

Now, what have the authors received in hard cash for their year's work? I will tell you exactly: Of one 1,700 copies were sold. No royalty was paid upon the first thousand to cover manufacture, etc., and upon the remaining 700 copies the author received the regular 10 per cent. The book sold for \$1. The net revenue to the author was, therefore, \$70. His typewriter's bill was \$61.50. Net profit, \$8.50, and the book has stopped selling. The other author was a trifle more fortunate in that his novel reached a sale of 2,000, all but five copies. Like the first, he received a 10 per cent. royalty only after the first 1,000 copies. Unfortunately, he bought so many copies of his own book for friends, that when his publisher's statement came it showed a credit in his favor of just \$39.50. Had he typewritten his manuscript the novel would have thrown him into debt.

West Virginia's Samson.
Mat Kramer of Putnam county, who is supposed by men who know him to be the strongest man in the civilized world, is attracting attention of the sporting circles far and near. One of his recent feats in which almost superhuman strength is called into account was the following: He raised, apparently with the greatest ease, a huge pedestal, weighing 1,300 pounds, and held it aloft above his head for several seconds.

Mr. Kramer is over six feet in height, and tips the beam at 285 pounds. It has been frequently asserted by papers in section of the state that he has exhibited degrees of strength that would make the renowned Australian giant turn green with envy.

There are men who will stake \$1,000 that he is the strongest human being in existence today.

Marriage a Failure.
The marriage-rate appears to be on the decline throughout Europe. In England and Wales bachelors now marry at a mean age of 26 3/4 years, and spinsters at 24 1/2 years, the age at marriage exhibiting a tendency to increase. The average number of births to a marriage is for England and Wales about 1 1/2, the average for Italy being 5 1/2, Prussia 4 1/2, Austria 5 1/2, and France 5 1/2. In England and Wales the average duration of married life has been computed at about twenty-seven years.—Exchange.



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