

ODDITIES OF SHANGHAI

Near-Do-Wells And Business Failures Plentiful.

"REMITTANCE MEN" TOO.

All Trades Have Cold Angles—Queer Ways of Buying and Selling—Foreigners With Gold Bricks—Natives Speculate Heavily.

Geographically the Chinese city is almost at the end of the earth. Moral-wise, one can say without any hesitation it is at the end and in all the world has but one competitor for evil, and that is Port Said, says the Chicago News. The two are neck and neck for laurels of this description. Shanghai is the final bit of dead water to which the flotsam and jetsam of the stream of life seems to drift for the final rest in utter stagnation. Here "remitittance men" are thick. These unhappy creatures are black sheep, younger sons and other undesirable members of the well-to-do families who are allowed so many pounds a quarter by their loving friends on the pole condition that the cash is to be paid anywhere "east of the canal." So they drift along through India, down through the native states of the Malay peninsula and with short stops at Singapore and Hongkong they lay up for their final collapse in Shanghai, where they meet shoals of their fellows lapping up bad whiskey and soda at the bars of the various hotels, according to the recentness of the last allowances.

Next we find a large colony of alleged business men who have failed to "make good" in all other quarters of the globe and who have come out to China to sell some one a gold brick. These two classes form the matrix of the foreign unattached residents. These we have the men who are actually situated to real business houses with their home offices in the states. These are for the most part doing short sentences and are respectable. Lastly we have the Shanghai business man, who is one of the most strenuous gentlemen of his kind to be seen the world over. He speculates in shares, of which there are an enormous variety in Shanghai, and by dealing in which one may easily go broke. These brokers spend their time tearing up and down the Bund in their voluminous drawn by China ponies. They always ride with one foot out the step in order to save time in getting in and out. At 11 o'clock every one begins to drift toward the Shanghai club and by noon the bar is lull. By 2 o'clock the racket is over and only the dead remain, washed away on sofas here and there where they have fallen after the battle. At 5 o'clock the rush begins again and lasts until the small hours in the morning. Everybody in Shanghai drinks, mostly to excess.

Shanghai is the only place that I know of where the young men with incomes from \$50 to \$100 a month are able to spend twice that sum in a week on their establishments. Yet this seems to be the case. This remarkable way of living is fostered by the "chit" system. Chits are small pads of paper on which one writes an I. O. U. for any commodity or service conceivable. Any man who has a job can sign chits at almost any bar, store or dive in Shanghai.

If they are successful in their speculations they pay their chits and all goes well. If they fail and are unable to pay, borrow or steal, the means to meet their obligations they either kill themselves or go to Chiaofoo or Tientsin, until the trouble blows over, when it soon does, as there are so many others in the same boat.

The wealthy men of the place are mostly young fellows of the kind described who have prospered in their investments. These go in heavily for all sorts of deals and speculations. Their investment in trading business are made and to the westward, somewhat brain. Every man who is considered even in the most remote way a business deal comes in for a "squeeze" of some sort. I knew of a case last year where one man had a boat to sell and another man who had learned this description of the boat—for the names of principals are withheld by the editor, lest the latter be cut out entirely—was eager to snap it up for use in blockade running. The only man who could bring the two together happened to be a Chinese he was paid a lump sum of \$5,000. If you meet a man and he introduces you to another man who speaks you acquainted with a third man who sells you a commodity, numbers one and two block all negotiations until the seller consents to make the spoils with them. The result is that after a business deal has been made, through many hands there are many to be considered that no one is much out of it.

The bigger the grifter the better his name in Shanghai, that is, until he is caught and then he falls from grace and becomes a laughing stock to his neighbors.

Mechanics of Volcanoes.

In a recently published volume on volcanoes Prof. C. Doelter undertakes to tell why volcanoes have eruptions. Melted rock such as is flung from Vesuvius requires a temperature of 1,600 degrees Fahrenheit, so that it becomes liquid only far down in the earth, perhaps sixty or 100 miles. Below the outer crust of cooled and solidified rocks there must be a larger zone of rock which still remains solid, because its temperature is less than that of the melting point corresponding to the pressure under which it rests, and below that again there must be rock or magma in a state of fusion; it is to this magma that Prof. Doelter looks for the primary source of all volcanic activity. At the same time the depth at which this primary reservoir of magma lies and the pressure under which it is confined are so great that a direct eruption from it is inconceivable, but when by movements in the overlying crust or otherwise, a channel is opened the magma may rise to a depth where it is surrounded by rock at a lower temperature than the melting point. In these circumstances solidification begins.

From all volcanoes large quantities of steam, of carbonic acid and other gases are evolved, and the course of every lava stream is marked by clouds of steam evolved from the cooling lava. At one time—and the idea is still common—this steam was supposed to have been derived from sea water which had obtained access to the molten lava while still underground, but this explanation is now generally rejected, being impossible in some cases and inadequate in all, and the greater part of the steam and other emanations from a volcano are now regarded as directly derived from an original store in the interior of the earth. However this may be, it is certain that the magma from which volcanic lava is derived is not merely in a state of igneous fusion, but is combined with water and gases, which are given off as it solidifies, and by their escape frequently form miniature volcanoes, on the surface of lava streams.

If the solidification takes place underground the steam and gases are expelled, and, if there is no free escape, pressure may increase till it becomes great enough to overcome the resistance of the overlying rock and so lead to an eruption and the formation of a volcano, whose character will depend on the nature of the reservoir from which the eruption took place.

Taking a Chinese Oath. In the Straits Times of Singapore appears a description of the way Chinese took an oath before giving testimony in a lawsuit. "At 2 o'clock," it says, "all the parties were on the ground behind the courthouse with a large company of spectators in attendance. It had lain with the plaintiff to provide the fowls and he certainly had not followed the old agricultural habit that the sacrificial lamb should be the sweetest of the flock or the dove the whitest and plumpest in the brood. Two meager cockerels, whose original color may have been white but was now a drab gray, floundered on the ground with their legs tied and beside them lay joss sticks and little candles and a murderous-looking chopper. The interpreter having gone through the preliminaries, one of the Chinamen fixed the joss sticks in the ground and set them afire. Then in a businesslike way he took up the chopper and one of the birds and was preparing to cut off its head upon a loose brick. But the owner of the weapon was not going to risk the edge of his chopper and he fetched a plank of wood upon which to have the operation performed.

Then the executioner came down with a mighty whack upon the poor complaining cock and its career was ended. And so with the next one. Then the headless bodies began a ghastly dance upon the place of their execution until the muscles stiffened and they became stark. The Chinese will not eat a fowl which has been used for the purposes of this oath, but a grinning Indian watchman took possession of the bodies—heads and all—and no doubt revelled in unvented abundance of curried fowl that night.

"It was rather interesting to notice the haste with which the parties who had taken the oath cleared off afterward. If, as the Chinese believe, the gods are very touchy upon the sacredness of the ceremonial and quick to punish its infringers, the men seemed determined not to run any chance of summary visitation on the spot."

PROTECTING OUR BIRDS

Audobon Society Acquires Twenty-five Islands for Hatcheries.

CAPACITY FIVE MILLION

Largest Bird-Breeding Preserve in the World—Heretofore Millions of Wings Have Been Shipped From These Islands.

Wild grass-covered islands, numbering twenty-five, embracing 4,000 acres, and with a capacity for breeding 3,000,000 to 5,000,000 birds a year, have been acquired by the Audubon Society of Louisiana, just off the Louisiana Coast, in the Gulf of Mexico.

They comprise the largest bird breeding preserves in the world. Pau wardens patrol the preserves, carefully guard them during the hatching. It is expected that over 1,000,000 terns will be raised in one year alone. With the limited machinery of the society in operation over 40,000 birds were raised and protected in 1905. One island produced 25,000.

There are three groups of islands now dedicated to one purpose—Bretton Island Reservation, owned by the United States Government, the largest of which is Bretton Island, six miles in length, the seven-teen islands obtained from the Lake Berne Levee Board on a ten-year lease for a rental of \$45 per year, and Bastidore Island and its keys, obtained by purchase from the State of Louisiana, embracing about one thousand acres. The society paid 25 cents per acre.

The islands rise only a few feet above the sea. They are covered with sea grass and a species of salt-water reeds. They present a barren waste, desolate and dreary. No human being was ever known to live on one of them, although bird hunters have for years frequented the reservation to kill the birds for their beautiful plumage.

Getting the eggs and killing the terns and laughing gulls for large millinery houses in the East has been a thriving business on this coast until the Audubon Society finally secured possession of the preserves and protected the game. Millions of wings have been shipped from these islands, and as high as 100,000 eggs in a season have gone to St. Louis, Mo., where they are used in the manufacture of the delicate films on photographic plates.

So persistent is the demand for the wing feathers—certain New York wholesale millinery establishments offered the natives on this coast the fabulous price of \$60 in gold per ounce for the plumage of the white heron and 75 cents each for the wings of the terns. The birds bred on these islands are laughing gulls, shearwaters, white herons, Wilson's terns, Foster's terns, royal terns and Caspian terns.

They lay their eggs on the sand and shells—no covering whatever. The female birds set on them there, the sun having as much to do with the hatching as anything else. As soon as the young birds come from the shells they are fed along the beach, and soon catch their own supply of small fish. The millions of birds that infest the place have caused the island to become the great breeding place for raccoons, the animals burrowing in the grass and sand, as there are no trees for their dens.

The Audubon Society has just let exclusive privileges to a number of trained and professional trappers of the Louisiana swamps to catch the raccoons on the islands, and assure them protection and exclusive grants. It will be the first time that any human beings have attempted to live on the islands. It is expected that fully 5,000 raccoons will be trapped on the islands, the process being practiced every winter until the preserves are free from them. The trappers will make big money from the furs.

A Useful Indian Tree. In northern India, close to the foot of the Himalayas, grows the mahwa tree. Sugar is made from its flowers as well as a cordial and the tree proves itself useful in other ways. As a nut-bearing tree it has been known for many ages. It belongs to the sapotaceae (starapple) family. Its blooming period lasts from the end of February till April. Quick after the pollen is formed the whitish tubular flowers swell to balls about as large as cherries, which contain a large amount of invert sugar (honey). The flower tubes fall, covering the ground in the greatest profusion. They are eagerly gathered by the natives and eaten. A tree yields from 200 to 300 pounds of flowers.

KAISER'S WAR AUTOMOBILE

Attains Twenty-five Miles an Hour Speed Over Rough Road.

Many attempts have been made in recent years to adapt the automobile to military uses, mainly for scouting or in the commissary or transportation departments, and even in some few instances for actual use on the "firing line." But in each case the car thus designed has been converted from an ordinary vehicle and would have been useless at the front under real service conditions, says the Pittsburg Gazette.

It has remained for the Germans to design and build a real war car—one well able to take care of itself at the front and sufficiently armored to protect its operator and crew from rifle and rapid-fire bullets.

The car has a conning tower and carries a rapid-fire gun and is roomy enough to accommodate its crew of two gunners and a driver, whose seat may be lowered when the car goes into action. Light-pressed steel itself is used as a covering for the motor hood and the same material is used to shield the gears and the driver's seat. Needless to say, the conning tower is also covered in the same way. The steel is scarcely one-half inch thick and the whole conveyance weighs little more than the heavier types of touring cars.

The driver is seated in a compartment separate from the tower part, but may enter it through a connecting door. Two small openings in the front give him an opportunity to see the road before him and to guide the car. A smaller opening between his compartment and the tower permits the gunner to direct him. An outside door, fastened on the interior, permits him to leave the car if he so desires. Ammunition is stored away in compact compartments.

The top of the tower, through which the gun is pointed, can be rotated so that the fire can be directed to any quarter. The gun by its machinery can be projected or withdrawn from the opening as desired. The wheels are sheathed with half-inch steel. A four wheel are direct driven there being two differentials and two transverse springs. By this arrangement the vehicle can be started and run over any kind of road, and experiments which have already been made showed that it can easily climb a 60 per cent grade, can go down into a ditch and come out again without any difficulty, while crossing a rough field was quite within its possibilities.

In the tests made this automobile fort easily made twenty-four miles an hour, cutting across fields from one road to another and demonstrating its ability to fight in a broken country. While in the experimental maneuvers the roads were used, where possible, the machine was purposely driven across country to make the test as severe as possible, but the car surmounted every obstacle with ease. The forty-horse-power motor is especially built, somewhat heavier in all its parts than a motor of similar power assigned for a touring car, and came through the long and exhaustive trial without heat or any of its parts getting out of order.

Australia Cotton Growing.

Australians are expecting to be cotton growers. The suitability of soil and climate for cotton growing in the greater part of Queensland, northern West Australia and the vast northern territory of South Australia has long been placed beyond dispute, but the paucity of population, apart from other considerations, hitherto has been an obstacle to the development of cotton growing. In the northern territory the cotton plant has diffused itself without man's help and may almost be regarded as part of North Australia flora, no less than seven out of eight known species flourishing there. Some years ago a cotton mill was established in Queensland, but failed for want of capital, low prices, and lack of experience. This discouraged the farmers, who turned to dairy farming. Things are different now. The farmers have faith once more in cotton growing, and are ready to undertake it on large scales if assured sufficient labor in the picking season. It is said that an average farmer's family could work on an area of from five to ten acres besides doing the other farm work.

The Jews Walling Place.

Matilde Serao, the Italian writer, thus describes the walling place of the Jews in Jerusalem, at the one remaining wall of Solomon's temple: "In the cold open air, in a narrow, filthy alley, their feet in the mire, they kiss these stones and weep over them in the presence of a crowd of weeping on-lookers. Turks and Christians. They endeavor to stifle their sobs, but, none the less, the air is filled with the sound of their weeping and with the rhythm of their sighs. Phlegmatic English tourists watch them through their eyeglasses, and when I was last there an impatient, obstinate old lady, riding donkey-back, insisted upon inspecting the entire line, thereby greatly disturbing their piteous lament."

Aids to Robbery.

A boa constrictor and several vipers acted as accomplices in a robbery in Paris. The victim called at the flat of Eleonora Stizza, a snake charmer, with whom he had become acquainted and placed his pocket book on a small table. One of Mlle. Stizza's vipers immediately mounted guard over it and the snake charmer asked her visitor to leave. He refused to go without the pocket book and it was not until a formidable boa constrictor entered into the argument that he fled and sought police aid. The snake charmer was arrested on a charge of robbery.

BEAUTIFUL ISLE OF PINES

How the United States Lost This Valuable Possession.

A MECCA FOR INVALIDS.

Mountains Rich in Minerals None However Have Been Worked For Commercial Purposes—Wild Fruits and Nuts Abound.

In the negotiations of peace at Paris with Spain the United States paid a price for the Philippines and demanded cession of Porto Rico and the Isle of Pines as indemnity, says the St. Louis Republic. The island of Cuba was covered by a separate condition, which compelled evacuation by Spain and established a protectorate until an independent government could be organized.

There is no doubt as to the policy and purposes of the administration regarding the Isle of Pines in 1898. There can be no question that the officials of this government looked forward to the continuance of American authority over the Isle of Pines, holding that territory on the same basis as Porto Rico. In pursuance of such policy this government built docks at two ports. An excellent road was constructed from one of these ports, Nueva Gerona, to Santa Fe, the principal community of the island, situated in the interior. Officials of the United States carried out an investigation of the harbors. They reported that the Isle of Pines was admirably adapted by nature for a naval station. Nueva Gerona, the port most accessible from Cuba, is in the Casas river, which admits coastwise boats. Near the mouth of the Casas is a harbor where vessels drawing 15 to 20 feet can enter. On the west side of the island are several harbors for vessels of 20 and 25 feet draft. On the southwest is a spacious anchorage formed by the peninsula of Cape Frances which has depths varying from 10 to 33 feet. There are other harbors on the south southeast. In fact, the coast line is a series of indentations and peninsulas affording ideal conditions to the navy for a station, with very deep water off shore on the south.

From time to time this government has considered the expediency of purchasing the Danish West Indies for strategic purposes. Much more effective for influence in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean sea is the Isle of Pines. Yucatan is 230 miles west and Jamaica, the British base, is 370 miles southeast. The mouth of the Panama canal is 550 miles a little east of south. The nearest point of Cuba is 35 miles north. The administration fully intended to hold and develop the Isle of Pines. A change of policy came when it was decided to require Cuba as part of the price for intervention the grant of a naval station upon the island of Cuba. Having secured these, the administration committed itself to the return of the Isle of Pines.

While the policy of retention of the Isle of Pines prevailed, United States government officials, who investigated the natural conditions, became enthusiastic over them. Although south of Cuba, the Isle is gifted with a climate that an official of the department of state declared "the finest on earth." The mercury, he said, seldom goes above 90 degrees and never below 68. The average for the year, and the prevailing temperature, is about 75. A great future as a health resort was predicted—a Riviera for the western hemisphere. The Isle is not a growth of coral reefs, mangrove swamps and the bottom and jessam of the gulf stream, like the Keys. It was uplifted by the series of convulsions of nature which made the Antilles. The altitude is much greater than that part of Cuba lying nearest. The general elevation is from 50 to 100 feet above the sea. But the interior has ridges, hills, cliffs and mountains considerably higher than the Ozarks.

For generations the Isle of Pines was a health resort of Cuban families. The Spanish government maintained a sanitarium there for sick soldiers. Neither yellow fever nor any other of the tropical or semitropical epidemics has ever been known on the Isle. During two centuries the mineral waters of the Isle have had widespread reputation for curative properties; especially in kidney and rheumatic troubles. Near the town of Santa Fe are thermal springs of hot water; baths are maintained. Nueva Gerona has magnesium springs, celebrated for their efficacy in stomach troubles. Casas is a mountain of beautiful marbles of various colors. Cristales covered with green rock crystals. The marbles of various colors. Cristales is grain, lying in veins from 5 to 25 feet thick. In various parts of the island is found manganese, the deposits about Santa Fe being of unknown depth. In the Sigüenza hills, near the southwest coast, are veins of pure brown hematite.

No Use for It. Agent—"I am introducing a new cook-book, madam. The price is only 98 cents, and—"

Lady (interrupting)—"Nothing doing. My husband is a poet."

No Longer Needed. Her—"I hear the count has broken off his engagement with that homely heiress. I wonder why?"

Him—"He recently inherited a million from a distant relative."

Restrictions. Pat—"That do you think av twins? Mike—Begobs, twins is sich a bargain that they should only give one to a customer.—Puck.

EUROPEAN TOWN GATES.

Recalls the Part They Played in the History of Former Times.

A good deal of the history of the Eastern world has a gate in the background, says a writer in the New York Mail. The gates of Jewish cities were places of jurisdiction as well as of cumulative fortification. There courts were held so that men who labored in the fields might not lose time in distant journeys, and country people might not need to enter the city in order to have their litigation settled.

The day's supplies passed through them, the babble of another market place rose about them, the crippled "an" mendicant lined the highway that led under them. You remember that Mordecai sat at the king's gate and that Ahabom "rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate" to undermine his father's rule. Above was uttered the most pathetic of human laments: "And the king was much moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

With the Jews the gates stood for commerce, for defense, for justice, for dominion. They put it as strong as the gates of hell should not prevail against you. The Kremlin gates mean only less to the Russians than the gates of Babel. They are more like fortress temples than movable barriers in a breadth of wall. Richly carved and pinnacled, the towers rise above them to a stately height, and there are recesses, chambers and balconies to diversify their upper spaces. The Gate of the Redeemer illustrates Russian history. It is on Easter day the Czar used to pass bareheaded, leading the ass on which the patriarch rode from the Cathedral of Vasilii the Beardless. Out from it they issued clad in armor when they took the field against the Tartar. The pious Russian removes his hat there as he prostrates himself before a shrine.

London has a gate of hoary memory in the Temple Bar, and the gorgeous processions of aldermen and goldsmiths, the Lord Mayor at their head that meet the King there when he makes a royal progress to the city perpetuate the ceremonial of a time when it was no trivial matter to cross a boundary. Dr. Johnson said that "the full tide of human existence" was about five minutes west of Temple Bar. Perhaps it has not moved more than a five-minute journey since his day.

Part of the charm of every European city of consequence, indeed, is the gates, still standing as memorials of a period when towns were walled and cannon small and ineffectual. In most cases the cities have grown far beyond the limits where the gates were ended, and their towers mark the outline of a ring of boulevards in whose green stretches they may fulfill, as at Munich, the function of park outcrops. But in some of the Italian cities their location shows that the town has shrunk from its old-time estate. You may still be halted under their shadow like the country people of other centuries, while gendarmes question you whether your hand baggage contains subject matter for the octroi.

The old gates of Europe embody that symbolism of the threshold which is no longer possible when cities have political limits but no well-defined beginnings and endings. Modern architects, however, are trying to realize it in the approaches of bridges, and it has picturesquely affected the entrance schemes of great American estates. With their piers and arches and the living chambers over their entrance ways, these venerable gates represent the purpose of medieval town life to express to the stranger its own dignity, opportunity and affluent good taste. One can never tell from the approaches of a modern city what awaits him, but these old gates are as functional and as truly indicative of the life they guard as the facades of a medieval cathedral.

Bats Can See With Ears.

Blind as a bat means that direction is sensed without eyes. The same may be true of spiders and insects whose eyes are problems to entomologists. It was long ago proved by Spallanzani, and the experiments have been verified later, that so highly organized a vertebrate as a bat was independent of its sight for sense of direction. Bats which Spallanzani rendered blind were found to fly at full speed and without hesitation through apertures no larger than their own bodies. And when such a bat was released in a room crossed by a network of fine threads the animal flew about without touching the threads. The bat was then caught, its external ears sealed with wax, and on being released could no longer find its way without touching the threads. This proved that the bat not only saw things by optical vision, but was also susceptible to wave vibrations transmitted through the external ear.

Wise to the Facts.

Paris—"Are you fond of champagne?"

Marks—"No, but I have spent a lot of money for the stuff."

Farks—"How's that?"

Marks—"I hold policies in three insurance companies."

Still Collecting.

Rodrick—"So Mrs. Plirtee belongs to the smart set, eh? Has she been out to South Dakota very often?"

Van Albert—"I should say so. Why, she actually has her 'den' papered with marriage certificates."