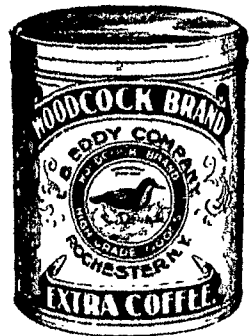


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THE SACRED WHITE ELEPHANT.

Great Ceremony Attended Its Capture in Former Times.

The glory of the white elephant has long since departed. Even in Siam, its native country, there are many evidences that it will soon cease to be treated other than the ordinary elephants. The contrast between its former condition and its present forlorn condition is remarkable.

The early historians of the Orient have left accounts of the capture of the white elephant in different parts of Indo-China, all of which lay great stress on the magnificent ceremony and the great delight of the kings to welcome the beast to their capitals. The fortunate individual who discovered the whereabouts of a white elephant was at once raised to the highest rank of nobility and very likely married to the king's daughter, though this was no great honor, as he probably had many dozens of wives. The capture being effected, guards of nobles were mounted over the animal, which was bound with silken ropes and led in the jungles where it was captured.

A palace was erected for its reception close to that of the King and roads were made from the place of capture to the principal highway. Installed in its palace, loaded with honors, and with the highest sounding titles, surrounded by the golden umbrellas and other insignia of greatness, the white elephant led a life of luxurious ease. Lulled to sleep by the choral chants of priests and amused during waking hours by the songs and dances of the royal corps de ballet. It was fed on delicious fruits and vegetables, which were specially selected and prepared, bathed every day by obedient attendants, thereby increasing the glory of the King and securing the superiority and stability of the fortunate country which possessed it.

Some forty-five years ago the King of Siam possessed a white elephant which was the chief delight and pride of the sovereign in spite of his high education and good intellect. As the greatest compliment he could think of paying to the Queen of England he sent her by the hands of her envoy, a few hairs pulled expressly for her from the tail of his beloved animal. Later, when the object of his affections died, he sent to his friend, Sir John Bowring, a toadling letter in English and a small piece of "his beautiful white skin."

The recent addition of a young specimen to a native collection gave an opportunity for comparison of existing with past conditions. A small pecuniary recompense was thought a sufficient reward for the man who made the capture. When it was time enough to be transported it was marched across the country to the nearest railway station, where a specially constructed truck was waiting to receive it. But there were no pillars, no silk and satin hangings, no admiring multitude to do homage to the mascot of their King and country. In Bangkok, however, some preparations were made. A considerable crowd was waiting at the station, and the streets were decorated here and there with bunting. A procession of four white elephants, residents of the capital, escorted the newcomer to its home. The trappings of the white elephants were tawdry, threadbare, red cloth, instead of the jewel-studded velvet and silk, and the diamond and ruby no longer ornamented the white tusks. The white elephant's existence is now hardly superior to that of the common black herd.

How Birds Scatter Fish Spawns.

Senator Young asked Del Travis how it happened that catfish and sunfish could be found in ponds on the prairie or any place else where there was no connection with running water, and received an explanation which is interesting. Every boy knows that he can catch "bull heads" in ponds which have not had running water in them for years, and the boys have had many different ways of explaining it. The favorite explanation of the boy is that it rains fish sometimes.

"The reason of it is this," said Mr. Travis. "The catfish and the sunfish lay their eggs in shallow water. In fact they always get as close to the shore as possible to deposit their eggs. The eggs are a sticky substance and when the birds get into the water to take a bath, they get the eggs on them. Then, they fly away and the eggs at the time they are in the first stage, becomes dry. The bird then goes to the first water it comes to and takes a bath. This releases the eggs and they settle in the pond. They hatch in a short time and that accounts for the bull heads in the ponds."

"There is another way the eggs are scattered. Many of the wading birds get their feet and legs covered with the substance and they transfer the eggs in a like manner. All other fish in this State excepting the catfish and the sunfish lay their eggs in water so deep that the birds cannot disturb them. This is true of the channel catfish and that is the reason the bull head is the only catfish found in the ponds."

Rural English Belief.

Some curious beliefs still linger in rural England. For instance, in Hertfordshire, when ancient houses are destroyed, the chimney stacks are left intact, the popular theory being that the houses are still in existence while these remain standing. This may be a survival of some ancient but now almost forgotten legal right.

FIRST MATCH MADE IN 1827.

But Lacked the Construction of the Present Day One.

In the nineteenth century the century in which so many wonderful things were done the fourth step in the development of the match was taken. In 1827, John Walker, a druggist in a small English town, tipped a splint with sulphur, chlorate of potash, and sulphide of antimony, and rubbed it on sandpaper, and it burst into flame. The druggist had discovered the first friction-chemical match, the kind we use today. It is called friction-chemical because it is made by mixing certain chemicals together and rubbing them. Although Walker's match did not require the bottle of acid, it nevertheless was not a good one. It could be lighted only by hard rubbing, and it spluttered and threw fire in all directions. In a few years, however, phosphorus was substituted on the tin for antimony, and the change worked wonders. The match could now be lighted with very little rubbing and it was no longer necessary to have sandpaper upon which to rub it. It would ignite when rubbed on any dry surface, and there was no longer any spluttering. This was the phosphorus match, the match with which we are so familiar.

After the invention of the easily lighted phosphorus match there was no longer use for the dip-splint or the strike-a-light. The old methods of getting a blaze were gradually laid aside and forgotten. The first phosphorus matches were sold at 25 cents a box, a box containing 144 matches, and they were used by but few. Now 100 matches can be bought for a cent. It is said that in the United States we use about 1,000,000,000 matches a year. This on an average is about five matches a day for every person. St. Nicholas

Rural vs. With Education.

One can understand that, here and there, in the past, a burglar who, when he has done his burglary, "loves to do a business in the sun," but it is quite a different proposition when a burglar who has a passion for music and art, or who regards their leisure by reading Homer and Xenophon.

Some time ago the tenant of a villa in the vicinity of Hamburg was robbed of his valuables by a band of burglars which proceeded from an adjoining string room, going to the door of the room, he heard the saw, raged, disconcerted, he looked at the piano and playing "Lullaby" "Mosses" with remarkable skill. The thief followed all proceed with a mastery and feeling which had the unison auditor spellbound. Suddenly the man broke off with a shrill discord, and throwing himself across the piano burst into bitter tears.

When the owner entered the room the musician started up in alarm and attempted to escape. Finding this impossible, he confessed that he had entered the house with felonious intent, but seeing the piano, on which he was in his hands as a professional performer, he could not resist the temptation of reviving old memories, until his feelings had finally overcome him.

In another case a resident in the Rue Montmartre, Paris, was startled in the early hours of the morning to hear sounds of laughter apparently proceeding from the room beneath him, which was his library. Stealing quietly downstairs, and peeping through the partly open door, he was amazed to see a strange man comfortably seated in an armchair, book in hand, and chuckling audibly as he read.

So absorbed was the reader that, before he had any suspicion that he was being watched, he found himself seized from behind by a pair of strong arms, and fading resistance useless he capitulated. He confessed to his captor that he was an actor who had fallen on evil days, and had entered his house with burglarious intent, when he chanced to see a copy of Moliere's plays on the library table. He had begun to read "Les Fourberies de Scapin," a comedy in which he had once played with considerable success, and had become so completely lost himself until he was rudely awakened by finding that he was a prisoner.

It is not many months since a love of classics proved a check in the career of a burglar in the West End of London. The owner of a flat near Piccadilly, returning home after midnight, was astonished to see a man placidly occupying his favorite seat and reading one of his books. When he was asked what he was doing there, the startled intruder, seeing that he was caught, frankly confessed that he had "come to steal, but had remained to read"; and he handed to his captor the volume—Horace's works—which he had found so seductive.

And, as evidence that a burglar may be a man of charity, we recall how Punch Palmer, one of the most daring and successful of house-breakers, not only founded and maintained a private infirmary in which old and infirm Norfolk villagers were made happy but also gave away several hundreds of pounds a year to his poor neighbors.

Chinese Census Taking.

In China an odd way of taking the census prevails. The cities and towns are arranged in groups of ten houses. The oldest man in each group visits the nine houses, which, with his own, make up the group, counts the members of every family, and sends his report to the Imperial Census Bureau.—Exchange.

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