

THE PLAY IN CHINA

It is a Curious Mixture of Noise, Costume and Strut.

DIN FROM START TO FINISH.

It Begins When the Curtain Rises and Continues Until the Last Scene Ends the Agony—The Property Man a Mighty Important Personage.

I was all tired and knocked out when I reached China, so I thought to myself, "I'll just go to a Chinese theater and spend a quiet evening. I won't understand anything, so I can doze off when I want to and come out as refreshed as a sprig of celery."

"What time does the play begin?" I asked as the guide led the way to the gallery, for in a Chinese theater the farther away you are the more aristocratic. No Chinese of caste would be caught in orchestra A.

"It has begun," he answered.

"How could that be?" I demanded, for it was still a few minutes of 8.

"It began yesterday. It runs two pieces days. It No. 1 play."

And so I found out. The better the play the longer it lasts. A Chinaman doesn't think he is getting his money's worth unless a play lasts a couple of days. Some of them continue a week. They consider a play that lasts only a night a certain raise and tag it on to a real play just to try it out.

The Chinese believe in noise. A theater isn't a theater to them unless it has a ladies' annex to a boiler factory just off stage. The hammering begins when the curtain goes up and continues until it falls. I soon found out that I erred seriously in coming to a Chinese theater to sleep. A person might drop off for a few minutes in a car shop, but he could never get near the knitting up of the raveled sleeve in a Chinese theater.

Chinese acting consists of the actors coming on again in another outfit of clothes. They come on, whirl a baton a couple of times and exeunt. While they are off another delegation of actors arrive with another collection of clothes. They whirl their clubs a few times and file out Indian style as another lodge arrives. There is no more expression on the face of a Chinese actor than on a punching bag.

When they want to show that the intrepid hero with a handful of men is trying to take a fortification against a vastly overwhelming enemy the property man hurries around in front of the hero with a black cloth stretched over a frame. This is the fortification, even though you can see his fingers gripping the breastworks. The dauntless hero marches across the stage, stops before the impregnable barrier, casts his eagle eye over it, draws his long sword and rips it asunder with one fell blow, the property man holding the swaying corner, while the hero marches through to victory. The intrepid hero stops to explain to his subordinates how he was able to accomplish the feat, while the property man drags the ramparts into the wings and begins pinning them up for the attack in the next act.

In a Chinese play there are no girls, their parts being taken by boys, speaking in a high, quavering voice as if something were too tight. When an actor wants to show that he is old he lies on a beard that comes to his waist. The beard works off to one corner and hangs grimly by one string, but the audience doesn't worry about that. They know that he is an old man because he has a beard.

I was constantly alert to figure out what kind of show it was. When I first got there and saw the constant change of costume I thought that it must be a musical comedy, but after studying it more closely I saw that it was a farce. When they began to kill people I came to the conclusion that it was an opera. Later, when the hero found his wife in another man's arms, I decided that it was a problem play.

The most important person in a Chinese show is the property man. Alongside him the lead sinks into insignificance. He has charge of the show. The show opens when he says and closes when he wants to go out to a tea house. He keeps his properties where they are handy—down stage by the proscenium arch—right out where the audience can lean over and almost touch them. To know what is coming next all the audience has to do is to look over and see what the property man is getting ready.

Hour after hour the play continued without an intermission. Midnight came, and the actors seemed to be just getting into the spirit of the play. When I remembered that the play had been running for two days I felt sure that the next five minutes would see the last costume, but the show still continued.

I clung desperately on, determined to be in at the finish when the last hot, feverish kiss was pressed on the up-turned lips, but it didn't end that way. It ended when the leading man came rushing out with a cheese cutter and killed twelve men in breathless succession, the maimed and wounded thoughtfully crawling to the wings to die, thus giving the leading man the center of the stage until the envious property man came up and spitefully yanked the curtains to.—Homer Croy in Leslie's.

Correct Answer.
"Why isn't a nautical mile the same as an ordinary mile?"
"Because it is knot."—Boston Transcript.

The more one judges the less one loves.—Baizac.

Her Blunder.
Boas—You interest me strangely, Jack—as no other man ever has. Jack—You sprung that on me last night. Boas—Oh, was it you? Pardon me for repeating.—Judge.

Religion is the best armor in the world, but the worst cloak.—Newton.

Very Seldom.
When a man gets a raise at the office he can seldom keep it from his wife—that is, the information—and, well, the raise too.—Florida Times-Union.

Fire in the heart sends smoke in the head.—German Proverb.

PRUDENCE IN EATING.

Healthful Diet For a Person of Indoor Occupation.

In the American Magazine Dr. E. F. Bowers gives a diet suited to the average wealthy person of indoor occupation.

"An ordinary domestic egg equals about eight grams of protein. This is approximately the amount contained in a cubic inch of steak or in a half pint glass of milk. A generous slice of bread contains about four grams of protein. The quantity of potatoes ordinarily dispensed at a meal equals two and a half grams.

"Allowing for our inability completely to extract all the protein from any given amount of food and convert it into assimilable pabulum, a liberal modicum of albumen would be twice Hindbede's protein formula, or fifty grams—this, remember, for an entire day.

"Therefore a regular egg, five ounces of beefsteak and a glass of milk should supply for twenty-four hours all the protein the system requires. The balance of the diet should consist of starches, sugars, fats and plenty of cellulose or hay. This can best be found in vegetables, such as tomatoes, carrots, celery, turnips, beets, lettuce, squash and all that grand group of horse foods containing much fiber and little nutritive.

"Try this regimen for a while and see if fermentation, headache, insomnia, rheumatism, nervousness and "that tired feeling" do not disappear like snow upon the desert's dusty face. And, when they do, remember that the chances of later developing Bright's disease, hardening of the arteries and heart failure have been reduced to the irreducible minimum.

"The eating game is the most important in life."

CHIMNEYS ON LAMPS.

Why They Prevent the Lighted Wicks From Smoking.

When a lamp is burning without a chimney it generally smokes. That is because the oil which is coming up through the wick is being only partially burned. The carbon, which is about one-half of what the oil contains, is not being burned at all and goes off into the air in little black specks with the gases which are thrown off. The reason the carbon is not burned when the chimney is off is that there is not sufficient oxygen from the air combining with it as it is separated from the oil in the partial combustion that is going on.

To make the carbon in the oil burn you must mix it with plenty of oxygen at a certain temperature, and this can only be done by forcing sufficient oxygen through the flame to bring the heat of the flame to the point where the carbon will combine with it and burn.

When you put the chimney on the lamp you create a draft which forces more oxygen through the flame, brings the heat up to the proper temperature and enables the carbon to combine with it and burn. When you take the chimney off again the heat goes down when the draft is shut off and the lamp smokes again.

The chimney also protects the flame of the lamp from drafts from the sides and above and helps to make a brighter light, because a steady light is brighter than a flickering one.

The draft created by the chimney also forces the gases produced by the burning oil up and away from the flame. Some of these gases have a tendency to put out a light or a fire.—Philadelphia Press.

The Septuagint.

Septuagint means seventy. The septuagint version of the Old Testament originated, according to Aristeas, as follows: Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-247 B. C.) when engaged in making a collection of the laws of all nations for the great Alexandrine library was advised by his librarian to have the Jewish Scripture translated into Greek, and the king had the work done by seventy (or seventy-two) learned Jews from Jerusalem. The letter of Aristeas is probably mythical, but the substance of the story it tells is probably quite true.—New York American.

The Term "Bully."

The term bully in the days of Shakespeare had quite a different meaning from that which it has at present, being an expression of endearment and good fellowship. Some suppose that the word, when it is used in approval, is derived from the Dutch boel or German bulle, which stands for the English lover. The harsher use of the word is, however, to be traced to below, the root of bull, with a significance of noisy blustering.

Paying For the Bait.

Husband—Here's an enormous bill for a ball dress. What does it mean? Wife—Ah, you remember that green robe I wore at the ball at which I was introduced to you last year. Husband—So! Do you mean to say, then, that I am to pay for the trap in which I was caught?—London Telegraph.

Foiled Her.

Astounded Mother—Why, Tottie, you never told me you had invited so many children to this party. Small Hostess—That's cause you said that I could never keep a secret.—Life.

A ROYAL MYSTERY

Most Famous State Secret of the Reign of Louis XIV.

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

Who the Unfortunate Prisoner Was Has Never Been Disclosed, and When He Died His Body Was Destroyed by Chemicals in His Casket.

A famous state mystery of the reign of Louis XIV. of France was the mysterious prisoner, the Man in the Iron Mask. Many are the guesses which have been ventured as to who he was. Plays and novels have been written with the iron mask as the central character, but his identity has remained a secret. It is known without doubt that St. Mars during his life had as a prisoner a man whose face always was covered with a mask of black velvet fastened by springs of steel behind the head.

The guards had orders to kill the man if he ever exposed his face, and St. Mars' own life depended on nobody finding out who his prisoner was. His first prison was the castle of Pignerol. When St. Mars was transferred to the isles of St. Marguerite the king himself told the jailer to take his prisoner with him and cautioned him not to let him speak to any one, even his guards.

On the night of April 29, 1674, a closed litter escorted by a troop of horses stopped at Bron, some leagues from Lyons. From the litter descended a young man of slim and active figure, his face hidden by a mask and his hands firmly tied, in which state he lay down on a couch prepared beforehand. Next day ten horsemen arrived with sealed orders to convey the prisoner with the utmost secrecy to the fortress of Pignerol. So it was the Man in the Iron Mask began his twenty-nine years of captivity under the impassive, silent, remorseless St. Mars.

Several years later the man of the mask was seen again when St. Mars was transferred to St. Marguerite. This time troopers surrounded a chair covered with waxed cloth. The travelers stopped at an inn for supper. The more daring of the curious peasants peered through a small window from outside the locked supper room. The prisoner sat with his back to the window, and they could not tell whether he had on his mask. St. Mars sat opposite him with a pistol on each side of his plate.

This prisoner was the subject of much correspondence between St. Mars and Louis XIV. of France. Louis continually was asking about him. He gave full instructions as to the care of the man, and about the cell he was to occupy the king wrote:

"Let there be so many doors closed one after the other that the sentinels cannot hear a word, and you will never listen to anything he has to say on any pretext whatever. Threaten him with death if he ever opens his mouth to speak of anything but of what he may be absolutely in want of."

The blindly obedient St. Mars followed his instructions carefully. The doctor who waited on the prisoner said he had never seen his face, although he had examined his tongue. Dishes and plates were examined each time the prisoner was served to see if there was any writing on them. The guards always were ready to kill the moment he took off his mask.

In other respects the greatest attention was shown him, and nothing which he requested was refused. He always was dressed in black. St. Mars himself stood uncovered in his presence and remained standing until the prisoner had requested him to be seated. The jailer often took his meals with the prisoner.

Just who was the Man in the Iron Mask? Some thought he was an illegitimate son of Anne of Austria. Others said he was a twin brother of Louis XIV., whose claims might have deprived the king of his throne. Another writer makes him the leader of an association which was formed to assassinate the ruler. The most general belief is that he was Count Mattioli, first minister of the Duke of Mantua, who had betrayed the interests of Louis XIV. by falling to secure for him, as he had pledged himself to do in consideration for a bribe, possession of the fortress of Casale from his master. Louis XIV. knew the secret, but to all questions replied that if it was known who the prisoner was every one would be surprised to find him so uninteresting a person.

The prisoner died after a short illness in 1703. He was buried one autumn day, and his name was inserted in the prison register as "M. de Marchiel."

Eighty-six years later the frenzied citizens of Paris broke into the Bastille and rushed to the cell where it was known he had been kept. They stopped short before clean whitewashed walls. Nothing was in the room. The prisoner's clothes and the mask had been burned when he died. Chemicals had been put in his casket to destroy the body. Only one man had seen the face behind the iron mask during the twenty-nine years. He was St. Mars. And St. Mars never told.—Kansas City Times.

Her Blunder.

Boas—You interest me strangely, Jack—as no other man ever has. Jack—You sprung that on me last night. Boas—Oh, was it you? Pardon me for repeating.—Judge.

Religion is the best armor in the world, but the worst cloak.—Newton.

SALTS FINE FOR ACHING KIDNEYS

We eat too much meat, which clogs Kidneys, then Back hurts and Bladder bothers you.

Most folks forget that the kidneys, like the bowels, get sluggish and clogged and need a flushing occasionally, else we have backache and dull misery in the kidney region, severe headaches, rheumatic twinges, torpid liver, acid stomach, sleeplessness and all sorts of bladder disorders.

You simply must keep your kidneys active and clean, and the moment you feel an ache or pain in the kidney region, get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any good drug store here, take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and is harmless to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to normal activity. It also neutralizes the acids in the urine so it no longer irritates, thus ending bladder disorders.

Jad Salts is harmless; inexpensive; makes a delightful effervescent lithia water drink which every body should take now and then to keep their kidneys clean, thus avoiding serious complications. A well-known local druggist says he sells lots of Jad Salts to folks who believe in overcoming kidney trouble while it is only trouble.

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