

# The Llama's Curse.

THE water brought us our order and the change out of Tom Morton's half-sovereign. I pushed the latter over toward him with my left hand.

"Your change, Tom," said I. "Yes, of course," said Tom, who was absorbed in the story he was telling me. He put out his hand as if to pick the money up, but seemed to remember something, for he drew his hand back suddenly.

"Good heaven!" said he, "and I had forgotten that!" He took out his handkerchief, wrapped it around the forefinger of his right hand, and then, with the forefinger covered, gently scraped the money to ward him, piece by piece, and earnestly looked at each coin.

"Now, look here, Tom," said I, "this is a very pretty story that you have been telling me, but don't try and give it an air of reality by a performance like that."

"You can believe it or not, just as you like," said Tom, "but I tell you, Fred, that piece of money is coming along this way some day. I have seen it once, and I left it on the table. You don't care me touching any coin while I am certain that one is in circulation. But let me conclude what I was telling you."

"This is one of the most peculiar places you could think of, and one of our first duties was to present ourselves to the Grand Lama. We had to get a palanquin, for it was only met by Europeans of our importance should go in state, and it was while en route that we suddenly came to the praying mill. This was a sort of round-topped mill, with huge wooden posts sticking out at the side, which every Buddhist passing was supposed to take hold of, and push the mill round at least once."

"What caused Phil to do what he did then I don't know, but something seemed to impel him to get out of the palanquin, make a run over to the mill, catch hold of one of the wooden posts, and commence pushing it around at that place. The square where the mill was erected was pretty well filled with people, and when some of these saw what had been done they came rushing toward us, shouting and gesticulating. Phil had undoubtedly committed a sacrilege, and I was fearful for his safety. These fanatical Mongolians, once their religion is assailed in any shape or form, would certainly have no mercy upon the assailant."

"Phil came hurriedly back to me, jumped into the palanquin, and ordered the bearers to get on. But they were struck dumb with terror. The mob came for us, smashed in the doors of the palanquin, dragged us out, and for two minutes we were the liveliest sight on record going on. We got the worst of it, and bruised, bleeding and insensible, were carried off to prison."

"We were taken before the Grand Lama, and then and there he ordered us to be sent across the Siberian frontier with the utmost dispatch. The next day we were escorted by a man and an escort of soldiers, and it was not long before we arrived at the frontier, the town of Miamatshin, which really is the Mongolian portion of Klakka. We were taken along to the yellow posts which marked the actual frontier, and there the soldiers of the Lama stopped. We were removed from the palanquin in which we had been carried, and were commanded to sit down a few yards from the posts. Not twenty feet away were the black and white posts of the Russians, and it was indeed something to gladden our eyes to see the brown coat and the astrachan fez of the Russian Cossack who stood there on sentry."

"Our guards spread themselves out, then there came forward a Buddhist priest, who began to talk to us in a jargon which, of course, we could not understand. He finished at length and produced from his robe a wire on which were threaded some hundreds of brass 'cash,' which the Chinese always carry. He took two of the 'cash' off the wire and laid them in front of us on the ground."

"Then the priest began waving his arms about, and the Mongolians took their hand prayer mills and began turning them for all they were worth. The voice of the priest then rose on the air. He said three or four words and spat deliberately at each of the coins, which had been put on the ground before us."

"That was all. The priest departed, the soldier escorted us to the posts, the Russian sentry presented his rifle and we presented our passports. We passed over and breathed the comparatively free air of Russia. Our first duty when we were in Klakka was to go straight to the governor and say our complaint before him. He was agitated when he heard of the ceremony at the frontier, and told us that the Buddhist priest had put into circulation two coins which had received the sun god's curse, and that these coins would circulate throughout the world, harmless to everybody except the two they were destined for. The instant possession of either of these by the person cursed would mean immediate destruction."

"Nor was this all—the coins might come to us as brass 'cash,' or as a rouble, or as marks or pennies, as frames or containing anything, wherever we might be. We should never know when they were coming; we should take them in the ordinary way, we should handle them, but only for one moment; the next moment we should be dead."

"One day Tom sent for me, and it was to tell me that he was going to be married. This struck me as something peculiar, for I had thought Tom Morton was one of the last men likely to fall in love. The wedding day came off, everybody was pleased, and Tom and his bride went away to the south of France. A few more weeks rolled by and Tom returned. There was to be a reception at their London house, and the invitation which was sent me was one which I could not well refuse. In the evening I had the opportunity of a chat with Tom. We had gone out on the balcony, which overlooked the garden, and there I purposely made reference to the superstition which he had for the Lama's curse. "Perhaps," said I, "now that you have gone unscathed all these years, you are beginning to lose faith in the potency of that prophecy?"

## GREAT BRIDGE OF STEEL.

Another vast structure in progress at New York and New Jersey.

Brooklyn bridge No. 2 has now reached such a stage of its construction as to attract the daily interest of all business of greater New York whose business is transacted on Manhattan Island and whose homes are in the city of churches.

The second Brooklyn bridge will be 1,300 feet in length, or four and one-half feet longer between the towers than the present bridge, and will be the largest structure of the kind in the world. In 1885 the plans were made and in the fall of 1886 the work was begun with the caissons for the New York tower. These were built on the Brooklyn side and then taken across the river and anchored on the foundations, filled up with concrete and on top of this work the granite piers were built which support the towers. The work of building these granite supports was a difficult one. On the Brooklyn side the structure extends 325 feet above the high water line and 325 feet above the same line, and as the great masses of stone were unloaded and made ready for place in the structure and as thousands of tons of the same massive building material were piled up in the

great anchorage block, which contains about 45,000 yards of masonry, many observers of the work believed that the bridge would be another stone structure. When the piers were finished the structural steel made its appearance, and this has been used exclusively in the construction of the great towers. This material will give the bridge a lighter and more graceful appearance than the present bridge, although it will be larger than bridge No. 1 in many respects. The towers will each contain about 6,000,000 pounds of metal, and from these monster uprights, 355 feet high, the cables supporting the bridge will be hung. These cables support only the main span, 137 feet above the water; the approaches will be steel viaducts, extending on the New York side as far as Norfolk street and on the Brooklyn side to Havemeyer street.

The spans between the anchorage and the main span will be cantilevers. The structure will be 117 feet wide and will have four tracks for trolley cars, two tracks for elevated trains, two drive ways, two promenades and two bicycle paths.

**BIRDS THAT DO NOT SING.**

They far outnumber the Musicians of the Feathered Family.

Singing is applied to birds in the same sense that it is to human beings. Every person makes vocal sounds of some kind, but many persons never attempt to sing. So it is with birds. The eagle screams, the owl hoots, the wild geese honk, the crow caws, but none of these discordant sounds can be called singing. With the poet, the singing of birds means mirth, light-hearted joyousness, and most of us are poetic enough to view it in the same way. Birds sing most in the spring and the early summer, those happiest seasons of the year, while employed in nest-building and in rearing their young. Many of our most musical singers are silent all the rest of the year; at least they utter only low chirpings. It is natural, therefore, that lovers of birds should regard their singing as purely an expression of joy in the returning spring, and in their happy occupations.

Outside of what are properly classed as song birds there are many species that never pretend to sing; in fact, these far outnumber the musicians. They include the water birds of every kind, both swimmers and waders, all the birds of prey, eagles, hawks, owls and vultures; and all the gallinaceous tribes, comprising pheasants, partridges, turkeys and chickens. The noble of the turkey cock, the defiant crow of the "bob-white," are none of them true singers; yet it is quite probable that all of these sounds are uttered with precisely similar motives to those that inspire the sweet warbling of the song-sparrow, the clear whistle of the robin or the thrilling music of the wood-thrush.

But naturalists have set apart a very large group as song birds, and even among these there are many species that never sing at all. Birds of this class are the water birds of every kind, both swimmers and waders, all the birds of prey, eagles, hawks, owls and vultures; and all the gallinaceous tribes, comprising pheasants, partridges, turkeys and chickens. The noble of the turkey cock, the defiant crow of the "bob-white," are none of them true singers; yet it is quite probable that all of these sounds are uttered with precisely similar motives to those that inspire the sweet warbling of the song-sparrow, the clear whistle of the robin or the thrilling music of the wood-thrush.

**PREMATURE BURIAL SIGNAL.**

Device to Prevent the Possibility of Being Buried Alive.

The horror of being buried alive is a cause of torment to many people long before death, and the stories frequently seen in the paper of cases of

Mortality Among Hospital Nurses. Mortality among hospital nurses is startling. It has been ascertained that a healthy girl of 17, devoting herself to hospital nursing, dies on an average twenty-one years sooner than a girl of the same age moving among the general population. A hospital nurse at the age of 25 has the same mortality as a person at the age of 46 in the ordinary community.

Utah Has Much Asphalt. Should be supplied of asphalt at Trinidad become exhausted, according to an expert in the use of this material, a still greater bed which underlies a vast area of ground near Fort Duchesne, Utah, may be drawn upon. The ground is now part of an Indian reservation.

## MILLIONAIRES IN ALL LANDS.

Every Nation Has New Among Its Citizens with Immense Wealth.

Germany is not generally regarded as a land of rich men, and yet the golden book should have a very large section devoted to Germany and Austria-Hungary. It is true that most of the names would have preceded before them, but being of royal blood, they do not count in the list of millionaires. Without counting the private properties of the sovereigns, who ought not to be included, there are a dozen or so Teutonic highnesses whose wealth, not merely in lands but in money, is enormous. For instance, that of the father of the present Prince of Bulgaria was counted by many millionaires as being one of the richest in the world. He is now dead, but his son, the present Prince, is also very rich, for he has inherited the vast estates of his father. He is now dead, but his son, the present Prince, is also very rich, for he has inherited the vast estates of his father.

Fortune in a Truck Farm. There are over 900 acres of Philadelphia land under cultivation north of Porter street, in the district known as the Neck, and there is now living in Germantown a man who has amassed a fortune of \$500,000 in raising early vegetables in that locality. His two sons are still engaged in truck farming, although they have not the same chances as their father had during his civil war, when he sold for \$8 a barrel and onions brought \$12 a barrel. The father, with his half million, has removed to a handsome home in Germantown, where he lives in opulence.

Fish Preserved in Ice. State Fish and Game Commissioner Johnson is one of the oldest cowboys in the State. He is an exceptionally entertaining talker and a man who has seen a great deal of the world. This material will give the bridge a lighter and more graceful appearance than the present bridge, although it will be larger than bridge No. 1 in many respects. The towers will each contain about 6,000,000 pounds of metal, and from these monster uprights, 355 feet high, the cables supporting the bridge will be hung. These cables support only the main span, 137 feet above the water; the approaches will be steel viaducts, extending on the New York side as far as Norfolk street and on the Brooklyn side to Havemeyer street.

**SMOKERS' CANCER FALLACIES.**

General Grant's Illness Falsified by the Not Due to Tobacco.

Notwithstanding all the good arguments that have been offered against the evils of smoking, it is still a fact that the disease of cancer of the lip, mouth or throat, is entirely responsible for the production of cancer of the lip, mouth or throat. Since the illness of General Grant it has been the popular belief that the disease was caused by his overindulgence in tobacco. It is now, however, do not by any means confirm the theory. It was well settled in General Grant's case that tobacco in itself was not the initiative cause of his throat trouble, but merely induced a subsequent aggravation of symptoms by the extra irritation of the smoke passing over the already diseased tissue.

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## SCIENCE AND INVENTION.

Botanists and entomologists know that a dead swamp, or dead tree, standing near living trees is a source of peril to them, by furnishing a refuge and breeding-place for timber-borers and other injurious insects. Trees, as well as men, need hygienic surroundings.

In Mexico and our Southwest States the dreaded tarantula has a large web-spinning in the form of a large vase, called "tarantula's nest." Sweeping down upon the huge spider, the wasp paralyzes him with a single puncture from its sting, and then drags its helpless victim off to be buried, and to serve as food for a new generation of wasps. The wasp will even open the trap-door of a tarantula's nest and slay its enemy in its den.

Two writers in the National Geographic Magazine, Messrs. Garrett and Leboyer, after stating that there is a progressive drying of the climate on the Pacific coast. At no very remote period some of the arid plains of eastern Oregon were evidently covered with forests of trees resembling existing species near the coast. Mr. Garrett thinks that with the clearing away of the present forests the end of the redwood as a source of lumber will be at hand, because existing conditions do not favor its growth.

The London Optician reproduces the views of Dr. Kotz, a Russian physician, on fatigue of the eye. Whether muscular or retinal, fatigue of the eye, says Dr. Kotz, may be approximately measured by the number of eyelid movements, or involuntary blinks in a specified period. By this system, more than three movements per minute indicate a thoroughly unrefreshed condition of the eye. The experimental results obtained by this somewhat crude method are given as: Candlelight, 68 movements per minute; gas, 28; sunlight, 22; electric light, 18.

In France, Mons. Leboyer, trying to solve the problem of how to make photographs permanent and free from all change, has resorted to the plan of "curing" them in a furnace upon exhausted steam. He has found that the best for the purpose is the least found in prism in the extinct volcanic district of central France. This rock, which is extremely hard and unchangeable, receives the enamel without cracks. The photographic film, deposited on the enameled surface, and after the photograph has been made it is fired until the image becomes unalterably incorporated