IN HOLLAND'S ASIATIC BACKWOODS

FRANK CARPENTER DESCRIBES STRANGE CUSTOMS AND PEOPLE IN QUEER DUTCH ISLANDS.

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SOERBAIA, Java, July 3.—Soerbaia is within a half hour's ride of the Island of Madura, another of the Dutch East Indies. I don't know how many islands the Dutch control in this part of the world, but they must number thousands. The ocean here is peppered with their possessions. I came to Java from Australia and New Guinea, and my whole way was through islands. We sailed for days in sight of one little archipelago after another, now under the shadow of great volcanoes, and now almost skirting the cocoanut-lined shores of flat islets. The islands lie like stepping-stones on the face of the Indian Ocean from here to German New Guinea and the Dutch packet line of steamers makes regular trips from one to another.

Among the Madurese.

There are regular ferryboats from here to Madura, and the natives of that island come to Soerbaia to trade. The island is much like Java, but it is not so rich. It is very small, but is thickly populated and the people are wilder and fiercer than those about here. They are a jealous people and have frequent duels on account of jealousy. They use knives and lances in their fights and it takes several companies of Dutch soldiers to keep them in order.

I have seen some very fine cattle from Madura. The island is noted for its beef. The people are very fond of their stock and treat their cattle quite as well if not better than their children. They wash their cows all over every day. They keep them tied up and cut much of the feed for them. The result is that the animals grow so fat that some of them can only walk a few steps without resting.

The natives use their cattle as driving animals and one of their great amusements is cattle racing. The animals are raced in pairs, the owner standing on a board fastened to a long pole tied to the yoke. The end of the board is just about even with the hind legs of the cattle, and the man rests his hands on the flanks of his beasts as he urges them onward, yelling all the time and now and then slapping one to make it go faster.

Salt Monopoly.

The most of the salt of Java comes from Madura. It is from evaporated sea water. There are great reservoirs into which the water is flowed and dried. The workings are under the government and the sale of salt brings in a large part of the government revenues. All over Java there are salt waterhouses where merchants and private parties can buy salt. The smallest amount sold is four pounds, and the price of this is 21 Javanese cents, equal to 8 cents American, so that the cost is about 2 cents a pound. The merchants later on retail the salt to the people at a higher cost, but not much higher, for they can go to the warehouses and buy it for themselves.

King of the Cocos Islands.

Have you ever heard of the Cocos Islands? I met their king the other day. He is half English and half East Indian, but he speaks our language with a cockney accent. He is a little 6x9 king. Indeed, you would hardly call him a king at all, for he is only a big planter. As I chatted with him on the steamer I asked him what his business was, and he told me he owned the Cocos Islands and all they contained. I had never heard of the islands. I felt as ignorant as did Judge Riley of Virginia when President Hayes appointed him to represent Uncle Sam in Zanzibar. The judge, who knew more about politics than about geography, started out, but at the end of three months came back to the State Department at Washington and sent in his resignation, saying that he had coasted half way around the world, but that he could not find the blanked place.

I asked the owner of the Cocos Islands where his property was, and what it was. He told me that it lay just about 700 miles southwest of Sumatra and 1200 miles from Singapore. It consists of 24 small coral islands which have been planted in cocoanuts. The man has now hundreds of thousands of cocoanut trees and he harvests something like 6,000,000 cocoanuts every year. He told me how he managed his islands, and said that his gross receipts annually amounted to $70,000 and upward. The cocoanuts are gathered when they fall, and the meat is taken out and dried in the sun. It is then barreled up and sent away by the shipload. It requires about 600 men to do the work, and these and their families constitute the population. The king lives all alone with his family and the natives on these islands. His nearest shopping-place is Batavia, where he comes in a little schooner every three months or so. The trip is one of seven days, if the wind is right. If he strikes a calm, he may be a month on the way.

I asked him how he liked it. He replied it was not bad, but rather lonesome. He thinks that cocoanuts could be grown on the Philippine Islands at a profit, and tells me that a good grove ought to net at least $1 a tree a year. The nuts are planted 15 feet apart. The trees require no cultivation to speak of, and each tree will produce from 50 to 250 nuts annually.

I saw a great many cocoanut plantations during my stay in the Philippines, and was told that the trees each netted just about $1 a year. They begin to produce at seven years and continue to yield fruit for many years. It is estimated that there are more than 20,000,000 cocoanut trees in Java and Madura, and I find the natives drying cocoanuts to make copra everywhere I go. The copra is shipped to Europe, where it is used to make cocoanut oil, soap and other such things. From the husks brushes and matting are made, the fiber being very coarse and durable. It takes 7000 cocanuts to make one ton of fiber, and the best fiber is worth from $75 to $100 per ton.

In the Timor Islands.

Coming westward from Thursday Island, just north of Australia, the first large bodies of land I saw were a part of the Timor group of the Lesser Sunda Islands. I sailed right through this little archipelago, going between Wetta Island and the great Island of Timor. Timor is three times as large as Porto Rico, and is about equally owned by the Dutch and Portuguese. The Dutch part of it is far better ruled and far more prosperous than the Portuguese part. Each section has its capital, but that of the Portuguese—Dili—is a miserable village of clay huts, thatched with straw, while that of the Dutch—Kupang—is a fine little city, with a population of 7000.

About Dili there are coffee plantations run by Chinese who squeeze the life out of the people. The natives are a mixture of Malays, Papuans and Polynesians, the most of whom are semi-savage. Some are head hunters, and in the hills there are tribes whose chiefs sacrifice a certain number of slaves at every royal funeral.

The Dutch have not half as many people as the Portuguese, but their country is better governed. There is a resident Governor who advises with the native chiefs at Kupang, and there are soldiers to keep the people in order. There is considerable trade, the most of which is carried on by barter. A valuable article of exchange is a red bead worth so much that a single string will sell for $50.

Passing Wetta Island I sailed on for several days by the Islands of Ombay, Pantar and others to the great Island of Flores. This is as long as from Philadelphia to Boston, and about as wide as Porto Rico at its widest part. It was once claimed by the Portuguese, but is now owned by the Dutch. We could see the volcanoes from the steamer, and were told that the country was very mountainous, with many volcanoes. It has only about 250,000 people, who are mostly savages. There are no products to speak of. The largest steamers do not call there, and the chief business is done by native sailing vessels, which come in to buy birds' nests to sell to the Chinese for soup, and also tortoise shell and wax, sandal-wood and cinnamon.

The natives wear sarongs like the Javanese. They are taller than they and more strongly built. They are darker than the Malays, and have frizzly hair, which is rather wavy than woolly. They file their teeth to a point.

They are pagans, worshiping the earth, I am told they do not cultivate the earth because they consider it holy, and that they only dig for water at times of drouth, when they make holes in the river beds. Along the coast there are some Mohammedans, and a few Roman Catholics. There are two Dutch Catholic mission stations on the island, but, as a rule, little mission work has been done. This is so throughout the whole Dutch East Indies. The Dutch Government does not encourage missionaries, and I doubt whether any American missionaries would be permitted to settle in any of the Asiatic possessions of Holland with a view to Christianizing the people.

Sailing on westward from Flores, we passed by volcanic islands until we saw Sumbawa, the land of fire. This island is bigger than Jamaica, and it has many volcanoes, active and dormant. It has one whose crater is more than seven miles wide, and so big that you could drop the city of Washington in it and lose it. The crater was caused by the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815, when the whole apex of the mountain, a mass bigger and thicker than all Mount Washington, was blown up into the air. Tambora was then 13,000 feet high and 8,000 feet of it was sent skyward. The explosion was so great that it was heard in Sumatra, a thousand miles away, and also on the Island of Ternate, 900 miles in the opposite direction. That was a sample of old Mother Earth's fireworks in this part of the world. She is always spitting forth fire and flame. I can see the smoke arising from several peaks here at Soerbaia, and for many months I have been in sight of volcanoes, living and dead.

The eruption of Tambora was among the greatest ever known. Sea captains tell me that the ocean for miles around was covered with floating timber. There was so much ashes on the sea that the ships had trouble in making their way through them, and ashes so filled the air that it was pitch dark in the daytime long after the explosion away off here in Java, hundreds of miles to the westward. The whirlwinds were terrible. They tore up the largest trees by the roots. Men, horses and cattle were lifted up into the air and carried miles. The population about the volcano was destroyed, and altogether 70,000 of the natives lost their lives. There was a town lying at the foot of the mountain on the edge of the sea. When the top blew off, this town sank, the sea water covered it to the depth of 18 feet, and there it is to this day. At present there is no evidence of fire about this volcano. It made one big blaze and then went out. The jungle has since grown over the streams of lava, and the crater is now a mass of green, with ragged green edges.

The Island of Sumbawa is ruled by the Dutch through the natives. There are two towns, each of which has about 5000 people, and, in addition, about 140,000 living in villages. The people are not unlike our Moros. They have two Sultans, and many tribal chiefs. They are farmers and pony-raisers. Nearly every man has his own pony, and almost every native rides, carrying a spear with him. He keeps his weapon with him when at work in the fields.

Shortly after leaving Sumbawa we came to the Island of Lombok. This is one of the most interesting of the Dutch possessions. It has been settled for thousands of years, but it has been so shut off from the rest of the world that its natives are about the same as the Javanese were when the Dutch first came. Many of them are still Hindoos in religion, and they are divided pretty well into castes. Every now and then a widow is burned on the funeral pyre of her husband, and the natives have other old Hindoo customs.

The Dutch govern Lombok just as they do Java, and the taxes are now collected by the native officials with the assistance of the Hollanders. At one time in the past, according to Alfred Russell Wallace, an explorer who spent some time in Lombok, the rajah who was then supreme in the country had great trouble in making the natives pay up. All taxes were collected in rice, every village giving so much, according to the number of its inhabitants. The tax was light, but the island was so thickly populated that the rajah should have had enough for himself and all his officials. He had, however, thousands of nobles through whom taxes passed, and after a time he found his revenues steadily falling. Reports were sent in from one district that the people were sick and could not pay, from another that the crops had fallen off, and from others that the volcanoes had destroyed the lands. At the same time it was observed that the nobles were better dressed than ever, and that many of them were wearing gold and diamonds.

The rajah suspected something wrong. He looked over his receipts and found, according to reports, that the population of the island had fallen off. He should have so much rice from each man, woman and child, and lo! there were not half as many on the island as during his father's time. He wanted to take a new census, with the hope of increasing his revenue, but he knew that if he asked his officers for it that they would quickly understand that he was after their stealings, and the number turned in would be equal to the amount of rice he got last year, so that if he had a census taken it must be without the people knowing it.

He thought the matter over, and at last evolved the following plan of action: He sent out word to all his chiefs, priests and princes to come to his capital. Upon their arrival he told them that he had had a vision in which the spirit of the fire mountain had come to him and directed him to ascend the volcano, when it would again appear to him in the flesh and give him a communication of great importance to the people. He said that the chiefs must go with him almost to the top, and that every village must furnish men to clear the roads and build bridges. This was done, and with great ceremony His Royal Highness made the journey, while the people waited and wondered. As they neared the top of the mountain the Rajah ordered all to halt, and he went off alone to the extinct crater. He remained there a day and a night, and then came back looking very grave. He said that he had had a communication, but would not tell what it was. He said nothing until he had reached his capital, when he assembled the chiefs, princes and priests and told them how the great spirit had appeared to him with a face like burnished gold, and said:

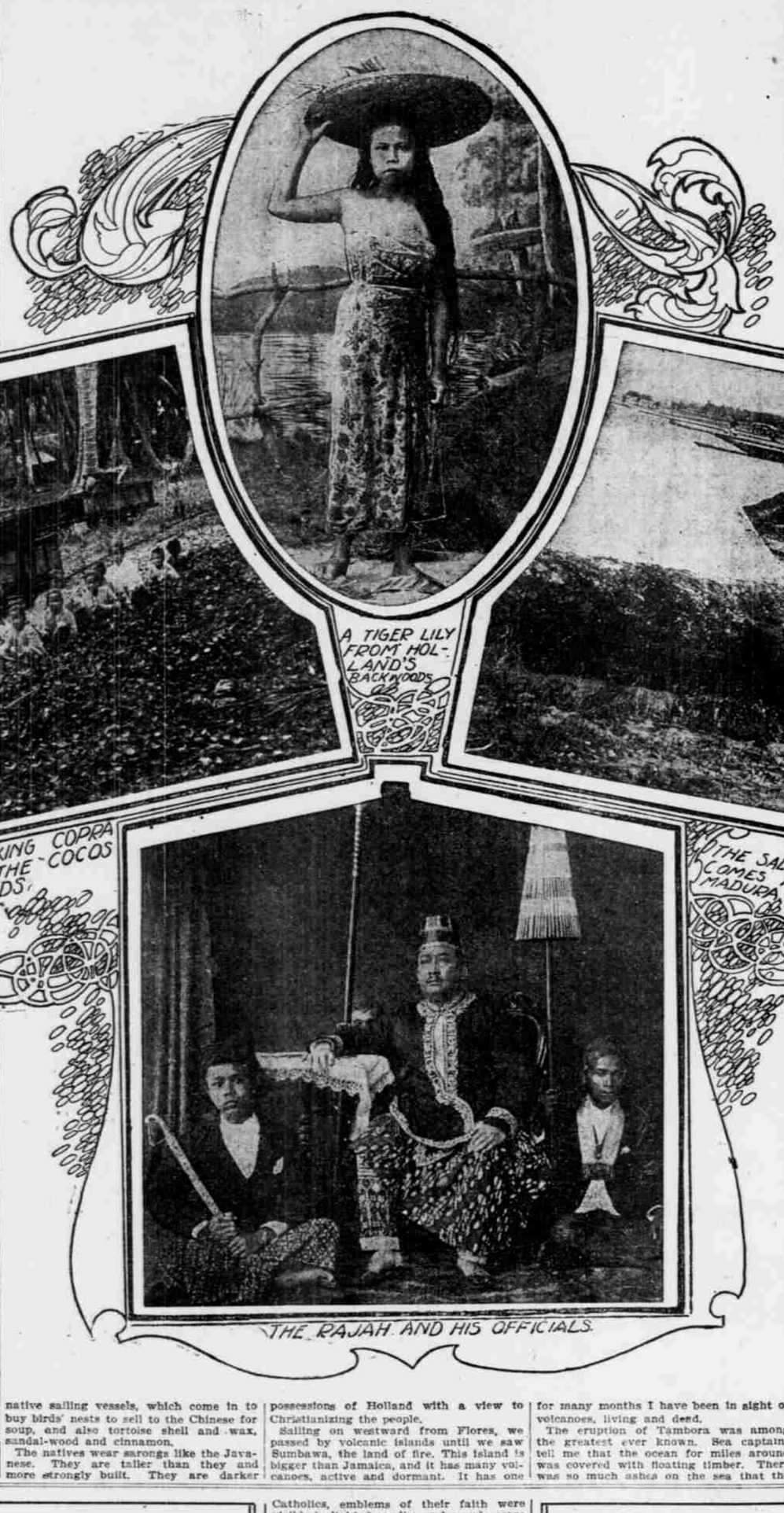
"Oh, Rajah, much plague and sickness and fevers are coming upon all the earth, upon men, upon horses and upon cattle, but as you and your people have obeyed me and come to my great mountain, I will teach you how you and all the people of Lombok may escape the plague."

The nobles were terrified, but they waited to hear the method of their salvation. After a short silence the Rajah told them that the great spirit had commanded that 12 sacred krises or swords be made, and that to make them every village and every district must send a bundle of needles, one needle for every head in the village. And when any grievous disease appeared in any village, one of the sacred krises should be sent there, and if every house in that village had sent the right number of needles, the disease would immediately cease. But if not, the kris would be of no avail, and the people would die.

The natives of Lombok were very superstitious. The nobles believed in their Rajah. They sent word out to their villages and all made haste to collect the needles with the greatest accuracy, for they feared that if one were wanting the whole village would suffer. One by one the head men of the village brought in their needles. The Rajah received them with his own hands, and marked the name of the village and district on each bundle and laid them away in a camphor wood chest. When they were all in the Rajah ordered the krises to be made from them under his own eye, and they were packed away for the time of the plague. Soon after this the collection of taxes occurred. To those villages who paid almost the full tax, the Rajah said nothing, but those who paid only a half or a fourth of what they should, he gave warning, saying:

"The needles from your village are many more than from such another village, yet your taxes are much less than theirs."

They did so and the taxes were at once increased, for, according to law, the Rajah could put to death those who did not pay justly. And so the Rajah became rich. He increased his soldiers and gave gold and jewels to his wife. He kept the krises, and if sickness appeared in the village he sent one to it. Then if the sickness went away the kris was supposed to have healed it, and the head men told the Rajah of its miraculous power. If it did not go away, every one was convinced that there must have been a mistake in the number of needles sent from that village, and the people thought the fault was their own. FRANK G. CARPENTER.



A TIGER LILY FROM HOLLAND'S BACKWOODS

MAKING COPRA IN THE COCOS ISLANDS

MOST OF THE SALT OF JAVA COMES FROM MADURA

THE RAJAH AND HIS OFFICIALS

LOUISE AS A NURSE

An Episode of Sailor Diggings, in Southern Oregon, 1858.

By J. C. W.

Oh, woman! in her hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,
. . . . . .
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel, thou."

The rainy season in the mines of California had set in in good earnest, and for three days and nights the rain had fallen in torrents, in sheets, in masses, and every manner in which one would be worse than the preceding, and the wind had blown in gusts, in whirls, and in steady violence, ceasing at times only to commence with greater fury.

The entire region was getting under water, the streams were over their banks, and mostly unfavorable, and roads and trails washed out, and otherwise impassable from trees blown over and across them. Would it never cease raining and blowing?

And yet it was what the men in camp had been waiting and wishing for all the long, dry season, and those who were gathered in Logan & Thompson's store and the hotel, near the close of the third day, were all glad to know that the miner's blessing, plenty of water, could now be had to work their claims, and fill their buckskin purses with golddust, and square accounts at store and bar.

They were about to separate and go to their cabins for the night, seeing there was no prospect of the mail-carrier getting in, and Jack Hamilton—"allowed": "No one could tramp in such a d——n storm as this."

However, he was mistaken, as just then was dimly seen coming along the trail from the coast town of Crescent City, a train of three mules, and when nearer, could be discovered on the first, a Mexican, soaked with rain and bent with fatigue, and on the second, as it came into the light of the blazing fire streaming through the open door of the hotel, a woman and Jack Hamilton, always gallant, going toward her, said in a tone of surprise, "Louise Dupee, by ——!"

"Yes; it is Louise, and you just take me off this animal right away quick! and carry me in by the fire," she answered. "Oh! how good it looks! and don't you hug me before all these men, either." And to the Mexican, "Domingo! Domingo! wake up! Do you want some brandy?" then addressing the bystanders: "Help him take care of the animals, some of you men, he is nearly finished."

Domingo groaned, but made out to roll off his mule, and Jack, lifting Louise in his brawny arms, set her down by the fire, where she went in a heap on the floor, saying:

"This lets me out!" and throwing off her hood showed a face still attractive, and hair dark and abundant, though wet and dripping.

"Oh! dear! I am so tired, and I thought for sure I was a goner at the ford, a mile or so back, as the mule stumbled and threw me in the river, but I caught the stirrup and was dragged out, and here I am.

"What are all you men staring at, anyhow? Didn't you ever see a woman before? I know you have. You have all seen me, except sober-face there!" meaning the minister, "and likely he will next time he comes to town. Oh! don't be scared, I won't hurt you a little bit. Give me something hot and strong, I am so wet and cold. And George Logan, get me a suit of your clothes to wear while mine are drying, and I will play Rosalind awhile. You know who she is, going in the woods after Orlando, but I never had to go in the woods after a man, did I Jack? But I saw the play once, in New Orleans, before I was a fool!

"What am I here for? Why, Domingo came over the range with his mule train from Gallce Creek, just before the storm came on and told me Tom Lantass was laid up in his cabin, badly hurt by a lot of stones and earth falling on him in his mining claim, and no one to care for him. Now Tom has been mighty good to me, and given me many an ounce of dust, so I made Domingo, whom I once got out of the hands of the Sheriff, a friend of mine, when he had been using his knife on one of his countrymen, take three mules and load them with a mattress and other things to make Tom comfortable, and we started, and I am going to take care of him as long as he needs me.

"Come George! hurry up with those clothes, and you men better be going, as Domingo and I are to camp right here, and start at daylight, and I hope Le Bon Dieu will give us fine weather for the rest of our trip.

"So, adios! adios! and if I send word, I want you to come and help me." She did not say what, but we knew what she meant, and left for our cabins.

Jack and I went together, as our cabins were near, and before we crossed the low divide on our trail the rain ceased, the wind went down, except a low moaning in the tree-tops, and the full moon arose over old Gray Back serene and beautiful among the stars.

When we reached the top of the divide Jack took off his hat reverently and said: "Thank God! Louise will have her wish; the weather will be fair tomorrow."

The next morning when I looked from my cabin door I saw them going along the trail toward their destination and she waved her hand in good-by to me.

Two days afterward Domingo came with a note saying:

"Tom has passed in his last chip and now has a cold deck. Come and help me. LOUISE."

So Jack Hamilton, Bill Williams, "Cribbage" Dick and I went and found Tom lying dead in his cabin, calm and peaceful as though in his mother's house in Virginia, and as Louise and Domingo were Catholics, emblems of their faith were visible in lighted candles and a rude cross of fragrant white cedar on his breast.

We dug a grave with his own pick and shovel and laid him to rest at the foot of a large sugar pine, then returned to our own camp and Louise to Crescent City, and here the curtain falls.

Clinton, Ia.

Baby Should Sleep.

The Scotsman.

A young infant when in perfect health sleeps the greater part of both night and day—only waking to take its food. Therefore, when it is restless and wakeful there must be some cause for it, which must at once be sought for by the nurse or mother. Sometimes its clothing is too tight or in very rare cases a pin may be irritating the tender skin; even a crease or wrinkle in one of the tiny undergarments may disturb its rest. But more frequently is sleeplessness caused by over-feeding. The well-meaning mother, especially if she be young and inexperienced, will imagine that every time her darling cries it must be a sign of hunger. I dare say all of us—although we would not admit it for the world—have sometimes experienced a consciousness that we have eaten too hearty a dinner. With us the remedy is in our hands in the shape of exercise, but a tiny infant has to lie in that position in which its mother places it, frequently on its back; its misery is unspeakable, and it can only cry—it cannot even get up. It is desirable to have fixed hours for feeding your baby, and an interval of at least two hours should elapse between each meal. I believe that all must agree with the theory that there is greater danger in overfeeding than in underfeeding an infant. It is sometimes a good plan to completely undress a sleepless, crying baby, pass a sponge wrung out of warm water all over its little body, dry thoroughly and dress it again. From my own personal experience this has been known to succeed where everything else failed, and although it may entail a little trouble, the result is well worth it; in any case it can do no harm.

TESTED BY BUCKSAW

Obadiah Oldway Writes of Entertaining "Angels Unawares."

HOAXVILLE, Or., Nov. 28.—(To the Editor.)—I thought I'd write you a few lines to let you know where we are, and what we are adoing. We moved to Hoaxville about two months ago, and are agetting along fine. Of course Hannah and we has a spat once in awhile, but that ain't nothing new. You see we live next to the railroad, and when we first come here, Hannah, she'd feed every hobo that come along. Well, now, I couldn't stand that you know, and so I says one day, says I: "Hannah, you've got to quit bringing them fellers in and a feeding of 'em; we can't afford it, and if you keep it up, we'll have to go to the poorhouse ourselves."

"Obadiah," says she. "Ain't you a Christian? Don't you know I'm adoing missionary work with them poor lost souls?"

Hannah she belongs to the Women's Society for the Uplifting of Humanity, and she's always agiving a tract to somebody or something.

"Well, now," says I, "that's all right, but they're agetting too numerous, and it's a sin to encourage their laziness, and I ain't agoing to stand it no longer."

"Obadiah," says she, "you're just jealous, that's all."

Jehosaphat! Mr. Editor, you know that was a whopper. Nobody would be jealous of Hannah, especially if they'd a known her as long as I have, but she's so set in her way that there's no use trying to argue the matter, so I said in my most commanding tone: "If you're bound to waste your substance you can put 'em up a bite in a paper, but they shan't come in the house and get a regular meal any more."

"What does the Bible say about entertaining strangers," says she. "Don't it say they're sometimes angels unawares?"

"Yes, says I, "it does, and it tells somewheres about fallen angels and casting pearls before swine. These men don't want to work, and they hadn't ought to be fed."

"Well, Obadiah," says she, "you have a right to your opinion, I s'pose, and since you are so set against it I'll not ask 'em in any more, but I will feed 'em, for it ain't Christian like to refuse."

She went into the other room asinging "Rescue the Perishing," and I went out to the woodshed to cut my night's wood. A thought struck me all of a sudden that the bucksaw is an instrument of equalization. I just kept on athinking that night, and the next morning I kind awatched around the back door after the freight train pulled in, and the first hobo that wanted something to eat I set to sawing wood, while I went in the house.

"Hannah," says I, "there's a poor feller out here as wants a bite to eat; put him up something, can't you?"

She kind a bunged out her eyes, and started to say something, but changed her mind, and put a temperance tract in the paper sack with the grub. I waited until I thought he'd earned his breakfast. Then I took it out to him, and told him I was much obliged for his work, as I had the rheumatics powerful bad at times.

He said he was just out of the hospital in Portland himself, and so forth and so on.

Well, since then I hain't sawed any wood to speak of. I've got it all corded up in four-foot lengths in the woodshed out of sight, and all I have to do is to kind a watch when the freight trains come. The rest of the time I spend mostly at the grocery helping my feller citizens decide where Sampson was when Schley took a hand in receiving the Spanish fleet down there at Santiago.

Hannah says the other day, says she: "Obadiah, I believe that liver medicine is adoing you good; you ain't half so ugly as you was awhile back."

"Very likely it is," says I, but between you and me, Mr. Editor, it's just getting out of cutting wood that ails me.

Hannah wants the leaves raked off the yard, and I s'pose I'll have to do it tomorrow, unless an "angel unawares" happens around about dinner time and I see him before Hannah does. Yours truly,

OBADIAH EVERAT OLDWAY.

P. S. If you want to try my plan, Mr. Editor, you can always tell a good "angel unawares," by the way he handles the bucksaw. If he goes at it like he's been there before, I feed him; if he don't, I don't. Hannah says there won't be any bucksaws in heaven, I'm thankful for that, for there won't be any hobos, either.

Warren's Address.

Stand! the ground's your own, my braves!
Will ye give it up to slaves?
Will ye look for greener graves?
Hope for mercy still?
What's the mercy despots feel?
Hear in in that battle-peal!
Read it on yon bristling steel!
Ask it—ye who will.

Fear ye foes who kill for hire?
Will ye to your homes retire?
Look behind you! they're afire!
And, before you, see
Who have done it! From the vale
On they come! and will ye quail?
Leaden rain and iron hail
Let their welcome be!

In the God of battles trust!
Die we may—and die we must;
But, O where can dust to dust
Be consigned so well,
As where heaven its dews shall shed
On the martyred patriots' bed,
And the rocks shall raise their head,
Of his deeds to tell?

—JOHN PIERPONT.