

The Llama's Curse.

THE waiter 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 so covered, gently scraped the money toward 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 catch me touching any coin while I am certain that one is in circulation. But let me conclude what I was telling you."

"Urga is one of the most peculiar places you could think of, and one of our first duties was to present ourselves to the Grand Llama. We had to get a palanquin, for it was only meet that 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-about,' 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 to push it around at its topmost pace. The square where the mill was erected was pretty well filled with people, and when some of those 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 there was the liveliest fight on record going on. We got the worst of it, and bruised, bleeding and insensible, were carted off to prison.

"We were taken before the Grand Llama, and then there he ordered us to be sent across the Siberian frontier with the utmost dispatch. The next day we were hurried along under 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 Kiakta. We were taken along to the yellow posts which marked the actual frontier, and there the soldiers of the Llama 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 out 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 Kiakta was to go straight to the governor and lay 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 not come to us as brass 'cash,' they might come to us as a kopeck piece, or as a rouble; as marks or pfennigs, as francs or centimes, as 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 duly 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 Llama's coin.

"Perhaps," said I, "now that you have gone unscathed all these years, you are beginning to lose faith in the potency of that prophecy?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," said Tom, "I am getting a little shaky about it, and when one begins to reason, superstition on any subject is likely to get knocked out. It has struck me that after all it may be but mere foolery."

We entered the room once more, but I was dying for a smoke, and, making some excuse, I slipped away to the smoking room. I had been sitting there about five minutes when Tom Morton came in.

"What do you think?" he said. "My wife has got this Mongolian story into her head so much that she is perfectly ridiculous. She has been telling everybody about it, and, of course, they are all laughing, and the worst of it all is that she is laughing with them at me. But come, come, old fellow, I want to show you something."

I rose, threw my cigarette end away, and followed him. We went along the corridor to the drawing room, which was crowded, and even as we entered I heard Mrs. Morton's voice.

"I really do believe it will be such fun," she was saying. "Here comes Tom, and now we will try. A coin, if you please, from each of you. Let me see—how many are there here?—twenty-six, good! then I want twenty-six coins."

"Now, Tom," she said, "take off that wretched glove and let us demonstrate that you can touch money with your ungloved hand."

Tom was pale, and I saw his brow shining with perspiration. He muttered something, but what it was was lost in the laughter and banter which went around the room. With a quick, impulsive movement, he drew off his right glove.

"Well," he said, and I saw his lips wreathed into a hard, unmitigated smile. "I will take the coins just to show you that I am not afraid."

Then, one by one, his wife counted out the coins into his hand. Twenty were already there, when, unable to control the impulse which came over me, I started up, and cried: "Drop it, Tom. Why challenge such a thing as that?"

He looked at me, and I saw how pale and how stern was his face. He said nothing to me, but merely turned to his wife with the whisper: "Go on!"

"Twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven—"

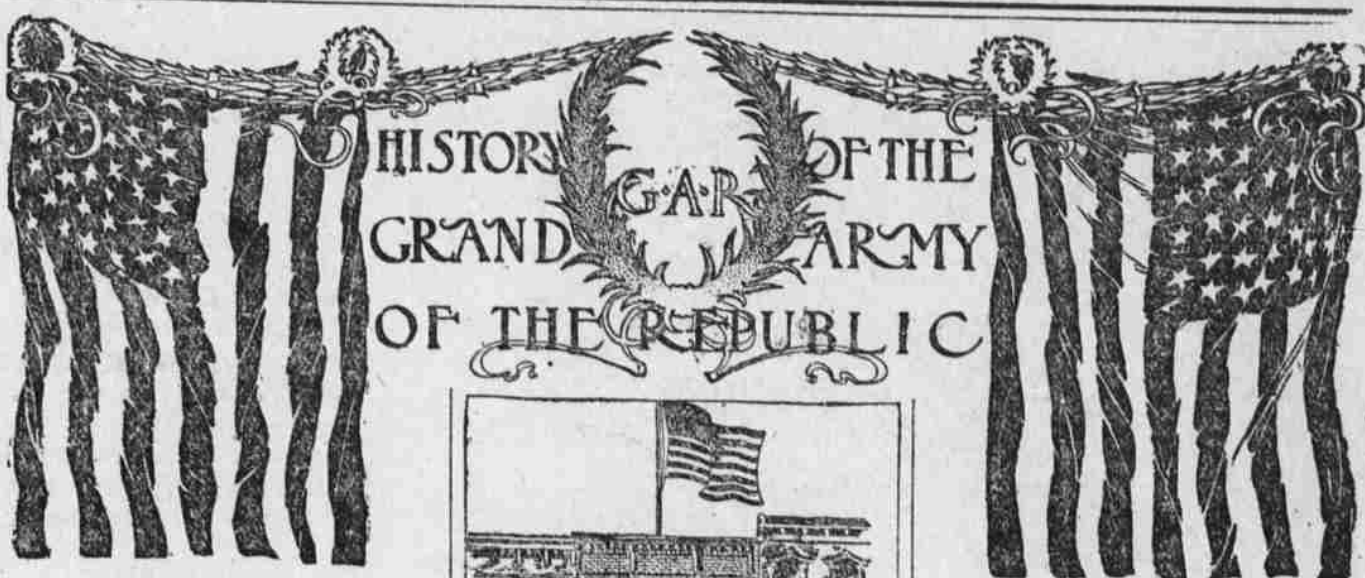
"Twenty-seven," I cried, "what is that, there are only twenty-six people here, there is a mis—" But I could get no further. Tom had staggered back, his body shrunken in size. He fell to the floor. A death-like silence fell over the assemblage. I strode over to my friend's prostrate form.

Tom was dead and cold, and in his right hand there were twenty-seven coins. I looked at the top one; it was a German piece, value twenty marks. I took it to the light and gazed upon it. Across the profile of Emperor William II. I saw a mark which described a true square, and then I knew that the Llama's curse at length had had effect. —Penny Pictorial Magazine.

Pretty Sweet.

Frank R. Stockton, the story-writer, was once drinking tea with a young lady, who said to him: "It seems inconsistent, Mr. Stockton, for us to put sugar in our tea to make it sweet, and then to put in lemon to make it sour." "Ah, well," replied the author of "The Lady and the Tiger?" "but you know we like to have both women and men in society." —Ladies' Home Journal.

All some women get out of their church work is to be "talked about."



The thought of founding an association that would preserve the friendships and memories of their common trials and dangers among the men who fought for the Union during the Civil War was conceived by the Rev. William J. Rutledge, of Petersburg, Ill., who, during the war, was chaplain of the Fourteenth Illinois Infantry. Chaplain Rutledge was the tentative and intimate friend of Dr. B. F. Stephenson after the latter joined the Fourteenth Regiment in 1862. To him he suggested his idea, and they agreed to work together for the purpose of organizing such an association after the close of the war.

After peace had been restored both were mustered out and returned to their homes. They kept up a lively correspondence, however, and in March, 1866, met, by appointment, in Springfield, Ill., to consider the draft of a ritual for the organization which they intended to found. Dr. Stephenson had prepared such a draft and consulted many former officers of the Union army in reference to it, among them Col. John M. Snyder, Governor Oglesby's secretary; Dr. James Hamilton, Maj. Robert M. Woods, Maj. Robert Allen, Col. Martin Flood, Col. Daniel Grass, Col. Edward Prince, and many others.

The ritual was finally adopted and printed in the office of the Decatur, Ill., Tribune, which was owned by I. W. Coltrin and Joseph Pryor. Both men, as well as nearly all their employees, had been in the military service during the war. They were all pledged to the utmost secrecy. Capt. John S. Phelps superintended the printing of the ritual.

Maj. B. F. Stephenson was the moving spirit of the movement, and devoted himself to his task with great energy and enthusiasm. His friends succeeded in interesting many other officers and men of the Union army on behalf of the proposed organization, and it was finally formed in Springfield in March, 1866.

The first post was founded in Decatur, Ill., through the efforts of Dr.



J. W. Routh and Capt. M. F. Kanan, of that city. It was organized by Major Stephenson and Captain Phelps on April 6, 1866. The officers were mustered in by Major Stephenson, who then declared the post duly organized and ready for the transaction of any and all business that might come before it. At the regular meeting on April 10, 1866, N. G. Burns, Henry Gorman, N. E. Winholtz, W. H. Andrews and W. H. B. Rowe were mustered in as new members of the post.

In the meantime Major Stephenson and his comrades worked hard to perfect the constitution, which was finally accepted at a meeting in Springfield, May 9, 1866. It was printed in Springfield, and copies were sent to the Decatur Post No. 1 on May 15, followed shortly after by copies of the revised ritual. According to the constitution the name of the national organization was to be "The Grand Army of the Republic," and precinct, county and State organizations were provided for. Prior to the formal institution of Post No. 2 at Springfield a departmental staff had been agreed upon to prosecute the work of organizing posts.

The first State convention or encampment to form the Department of Illinois was held at Springfield, Ill., on July 12, 1866. At that time there were already thirty-nine Grand Army posts in the State of Illinois that had received their charters. The call for the convention was signed by many of the most prominent former army officers in the State. The convention was called

to order by Major Stephenson and Col. Walter B. Scates, of Chicago, was elected president. The Department of Illinois was formally organized.

The first national encampment, in which the national organization of the Grand Army of the Republic was perfected, was held at Indianapolis, Ind., on Nov. 20, 1866. It was called to order by Commander-in-Chief B. F. Stephenson, and Gen. John M. Palmer was elected permanent president of the convention. The war Governor of Indiana, Oliver P. Morton, attended the encampment and was received with great enthusiasm.

The second national encampment of the Grand Army did not take place until Jan. 15-17, 1868, and was held at Philadelphia. John A. Logan, of Illinois, was elected commander-in-chief. He was re-elected at the following two national encampments at Cincinnati and Washington, D. C. The fifth national encampment was held at Boston and elected A. E. Burnside commander-in-chief.

During the first years of its existence the growth of the Grand Army of the Republic was comparatively slow, and not until the latter part of the '70s did its marvelous growth really begin. In 1878 the Grand Army comprised but 31,016 members, while at the present time it comprises 7,184 posts, with 286,453 members. The greatest number of members was reached in 1890, when the national organization comprised 409,489 members in good standing. After this it is expected that the number will steadily decrease, owing to the mortality among the veterans.

Following is a list showing the number of members of the Grand Army, during the years from 1878 to the present time:

1878	.....	31,016	1890	.....	409,489
1879	.....	44,752	1891	.....	407,781
1880	.....	60,634	1892	.....	399,880
1881	.....	85,856	1893	.....	397,223
1882	.....	134,701	1894	.....	399,083
1883	.....	215,446	1895	.....	357,639
1884	.....	273,168	1896	.....	340,610
1885	.....	294,787	1897	.....	319,456
1886	.....	323,571	1898	.....	305,003
1887	.....	355,916	1899	.....	287,368
1888	.....	372,900	1900	.....	286,453
1889	.....	397,974			

WOMEN WHO SELL PAPERS.

Comparatively Few of the Sex in the Business in Chicago.

There are not many women in Chicago who follow the business of selling newspapers on the street, but those who do are not lacking in persistence, says the Chronicle. They have several advantages over boys, one being their sex and age, which appeal to buyers of papers; another is a commotion on the street does not divert them from their calling. Their memory of faces is remarkable. When a man buys a paper twice of a woman he is looked upon as a regular customer, and if he does not keep it up from day to day she puts on the look of one who is injured. This little trick works well. Not a few men will make it a point to defer purchasing until they reach her street corner. Not a few men regard the patronizing of such persons as a sort of charity and that makes them like to put themselves out a little to do it. All these characteristics of men the woman vender of newspapers understands, and with every sale there goes with the paper a look and a smile which make the buyer feel in his soul that he is ameliorating the condition of the poor and he comes again.

Nearly all women street vendors of newspapers in Chicago are considerably past middle age, and their make-up is one of genteel poverty—of "I have seen better days." Some who sell during the day spend an hour or two in the later afternoon and early evening selling papers, because they need the recreation and air, besides they make a little money out of it, which is a great help to them in meeting expenses.

There are a few newspaper sellers who fetch a child with them to the street, which serves as a manufacturer of sympathy. The child may belong to the woman who has it, and it may be borrowed for the occasion. The latter becomes a pretty self-evident fact when the child does not always put in its appearance, and especially so when the child bears no likeness of the woman and they act one toward the other as if there was no bond of relationship existing between them. The child's part in the play for sympathy and trade is a conspicuous one. If it is not too large it is carried in the woman's arms while she stands and on her lap while she sits, but in any event it is kept well

to the foreground as a childish appeal for patronage. It is a good card, and even men and women who believe it is all a play cannot always resist the promptings of their sympathy. Such women move from place to place. They are on one street corner to-day, another to-morrow, and somewhere else the next day. They do not work for regular customers—that is, those who borrow babies for the occasion.

There are a few women who are in the trade as a business. They are out early and late, always on hand for the first issue of the "Extra," and they push themselves forward quite as actively as the newsboys hustle. Such women do not resort to subterfuge. They do not play for sympathy, nor do they claim any favors because of their



WOMAN NEWSPAPER DEALER.

sex. They rely upon their push, energy and perhaps love of the excitement. Anyway, they go about it like a merchant who knows his goods have merit and that it is his business to proclaim that fact far and near.

There are a few quite old women in the business of selling newspapers on the street, and their age and feebleness obliges them to have a regular place to sit down. They have regular customers who buy of them out of honest sympathy because it is their chief if not their only means of support, and rarely ever is change asked when a nickel is given. This class, as a rule, are neat and clean in appearance and express their gratitude with their eyes rather than in words. It may be said that there are no young women in the business of selling newspapers on the

streets in Chicago, but there are a number of girls ranging in age from 8 to 12 years, and nearly all of them are bold, persistent and always chewing gum. They look untidy and seem to have no ambition to better their condition.

Grant Allen's Sense of Justice.

The Post of Philadelphia is responsible for the following story of "Grant Allen's Sense of Justice." He had, it appears, written a paper upon insects and bugs and sent it to his publisher. In it he minutely described both the bad and good sides of his subjects. Several days after he had dispatched the manuscript he wrote to the publisher: "Return at once proofs of chapter on bugs. I have found out that I have done one of them an injustice. I dreamt about him all one night, after I mailed the matter to you, and he looked at me with reproachful eyes and said I had made him out worse than he was. In looking up his history from a later source I have found out that he was right."

China to Outstrip Japan.

When the outside interference which is now inevitable shall have removed or modified the existing bars to trade China will leave Japan far behind from the industrial standpoint. The Chinese are as remarkable for their commercial morality as the Japanese are for the opposite; they are more solid, better balanced, take longer views, and are, in short, more merchants and less peddlers than the same class in Japan, and the natural resources of their immense country are such as Japan cannot hope to compete with, poor as she is in mineral wealth and subject to the most disastrous natural convulsions.

Special Delivery Is Popular.

The popularity of the special delivery branch of the United States mail service is evidenced by the fact that in 1899 more than 52,000,000 of these special stamps were sold. The distance traveled by the messengers who delivered these letters is estimated at nearly 3,000,000 miles.

A girl who takes two hat pins to fasten her hat on her hair, which then will not stay on, ought to be lost in admiration of the bald-headed men.

The proprietor of a hotel resembles a multitude, being a host in himself.