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THE KELEK.

A Peculiar Raft Boat Sacred to the River Tigris.

From Diarbekr to Bagdad, as a crow might do it, the distance is about 400 miles. As the kelek goes—a contrivance sacred to the river Tigris since the days of Adam and Eve—the distance is nigh upon a thousand miles and the time occupied anywhere between eight and twenty days. In "The Short Cut to India" David Fraser tells of the kelek and of his journey.

The kelek is easily constructed. Take any number of inflated goat-skins, from 100 up to 800, and tie them in rows underneath a framework of poplar poles. One or two pairs of great oars complete the ship, and it is ready for crew, cargo and passengers.

When a "globe trotter" ships aboard a kelek some of the cargo is left behind, and upon the space thus left vacant a hut is erected. A light wooden framework is hung round with cotton walls that roll up or let down, according to the desire of the occupant. In addition, the roof has a thick grass mat to keep out the sun.

The traveler enjoys entire privacy as regards the people on his own kelek, for he gives orders that nobody is to come a-haft his gable. At the end of his little house and projecting stern of the raft is a tiny bathroom protected from public gaze by cloth walls.

Thus the kelek combines all the advantages of a modern mansion, living room, kitchen, sanitary arrangements, abundant light and air and panoramic scenery that is an eternal feast for the eye.

We sailed one morning at 10 o'clock, with the temperature over a hundred in the shade. But heat may be corrected by a minimum of clothes and a maximum of cold water. The Tigris comes straight from the mountain snows of Kurdistan, and its flood was like ice compared with the fire of the air.

For a man who could not put on his own socks or tie the buttons of his waistcoat and doubled up, moreover, with a chronic lumbago that first plunge overboard was rather a venture. I looked for a long time before I leaped, thinking the while that, although a man may never forget how to sing or dance or pray, he can never forget how to swim, and then I shut my eyes and jumped. For my faith I was magnificently rewarded, and that first swim

in the brimming Tigris was absolutely and completely glorious.

There was mild adventure too. Suddenly the water deepened, and I swam frantically after the kelek. Just as I caught up with it the river shallowed again. I tried to jump aboard, but the jagged protecting poles of the framework made throwing oneself forward most difficult. The pace was so great that no sooner had I lifted a foot than the kelek slipped away from it, and with my weak hands I could not help the situation. A deepening of the water resulted in rescue from a ridiculous and uncomfortable position.

A Poisoned Shaft.

Things hadn't turned out too well with their love affair. The fatal word had just been spoken, and he was rejected. The rejected suitor stood respectfully before her, listening to her elaborate explanations of her decision. Below, the smooth waters rested in awesome wonder.

"I trust I have made myself sufficiently plain," she said.

"Well, I would scarcely go so far," he answered as his courage gradually returned. "It's but fair to give nature the credit for that," he added, as he retired in good order.

The Rare Gift of Courtesy.

Courtesy includes not merely social kindness, graces of speech, absence of rudeness, but honorable treatment of all business associates and of all the fellow citizens with whom a man of affairs may have business to transact. It is not American to keep one citizen waiting all day at the door because he is poor and to grant another citizen an interview because it is believed he is rich. Wisdom is not confined in a purse, and frequently much wisdom may be learned from a poor man.—Los Angeles Herald.

A Musical Beat.

A Paris journal relates that a party of men sitting in front of a boulevard cafe were recently approached by a man who had a clarinet in his hand and who said: "Gentlemen, excuse me. I have to make my living, but I suppose you would rather give me a sou not to hear me." They took the hint. He repeated this performance several times till one day one of the men said he felt like hearing a tune and asked him to play. "I am sorry," said the man with the clarinet, "but I cannot play a note."

HIS NAME.

The Answer Was Clear, but It Took Some Time to Understand.

"I wonder," mused the man who was smoking a cigar—"I wonder how there happen to be so many Smiths, Joneses and Browns in the world."

The man with the pipe replied: "I saw in the paper this morning that Aaracho Mechnowitski, a Russian Pole, has applied for permission to have his name changed to the more Englished Aaron Smith. That is one reason for the vast number of Smiths and might also account for the Joneses and Browns. Men with unpronounceable names have them changed for business as well as sensible reasons."

"Well," said the man with the cigar, "my name is not unpronounceable—it is as easy to say as mud or slush or anything—but it gives me a great deal of trouble. It's a monosyllable too."

"That's queer," was the natural remark. "What is it?"

"Guess."

"Oh, I couldn't. Of the eighty odd millions of people in the United States there are undoubtedly no more than an average of eighty to a name, or, to reverse the phrase, no fewer than a million surnames. No; you'll have to tell me. I won't venture it."

"Guess," suggested the other again.

But the man with the pipe shook his head. "I couldn't find a man's name haphazard, especially when, as you say in your case, the name is simple, easy to pronounce and yet causes trouble for you."

"So much trouble that I might think seriously of doing what Aaracho. What's-his-name is doing and get it changed."

"It must be rotten. What is it?"

And then for the third time he was told "Guess."

"Not in a million years."

"Every day of my life," said the objectioner.

"What is?"

"My name."

"But what is it?"

"Guess."

And it was.—New York Times.

One of Rhodes' Ideas.

A well known peer once asked Cecil Rhodes to stand godfather to his son, and he replied that he would on one condition, which was that he might invest at once £100

in the boy's name and give £100 on each succeeding birthday, provided that it should all go on at compound interest until the boy was old enough to begin to spend the interest, and that then he might yearly decide on what to spend it, so long as it was not on himself. "This," said Mr. Rhodes, "will do two things—first, it will teach your boy how to spend money, and, secondly, it will make him unselfish and kind to those in need."

How Ney Faced Death.

Marshal Ney was the son of a hardworking cooper and had risen from the ranks of the army. He was a child of the people, and whatever may have been his vanities he threw them all aside in his last days. When he was led out to death an officer ordered a bandage tied over his eyes.

"Why should you do that?" said Ney. "Haven't I been accustomed for twenty-five years to look bullets and cannon balls in the face?"

He himself ordered the soldiers to fire, standing and facing them. His career summed up in one life the spectacular heroism of the past.

Stone Plants.

In South Africa there is found a plant of the genus mesembryanthemum, growing on a stony ground, which so closely resembles a pebble that it is invariably taken by a stranger to be a stone. Another species of the same plant growing on the hills near the Karoo produces two leaves about as large as ducks' eggs, having a surface resembling weathered stone of brownish gray color, tinged with green. These plants look like stones, but for a short time they bear bright yellow flowers. Still another species of the same plant resembles the quartz pebbles among which it grows.

Chinamen's Bones.

All Chinamen who die in America are buried in American cemeteries, but it is the understanding that, some years later, the bones of the dead will be gathered up and sent back home for burial. This understanding with the dead is never betrayed, and there are a score of Chinamen who make a good living as bone collectors and bone shippers. The men travel all over America. Few cemeteries are unknown to them. There is no freight line that has not carried Frisco-ward on their behalf many parcels of Chinese bones for shipment home.—Exchange.

GOLD LEAF.

The Many Stages in the Process of Its Manufacture.

Gold leaf, of which such large quantities are used by picture frame makers as well as by other trades, is made as follows:

An alloy of the desired color having been formed, the gold is melted in a crucible at a temperature well above the fusion point. It is then cased into an ingot and flattened by rolling between a pair of powerful steel rollers into a ribbon one and a half inches wide and ten feet in length to the ounce.

After being flattened it is annealed and cut in pieces of about six and a half grains each and placed between the leaves of a "cutch," which is about half an inch thick and three and a half inches square, containing about 180 leaves of tough paper manufactured for the purpose. This is beaten on for about twenty minutes with a seventeen pound hammer, by which the gold is spread to the size of the cutch. Each leaf is then taken out and cut in four pieces.

These are put between the leaves of a "shoder" four and a half inches square and three-quarters of an inch thick, containing about 720 skins which have been worn out in the "mold" or finishing process, described later. The shoder requires about two hours' beating with a nine pound hammer. Each leaf is again cut in four pieces and placed between the leaves of a mold composed of about 950 of the finest gold beaters' skins five inches square and three-quarters of an inch thick, the contents of one shoder filling three molds.

The material has now reached the last and most difficult stage of the process. During the first hour the hammer is allowed to fall principally on the center of the mold. This causes gaping cracks upon the edges of the leaves, the sides of which rapidly coalesce without leaving any trace of the union after being beaten upon. At the second hour, when the gold is about the one hundred and fifty thousandth part of an inch in thickness, it for the first time permits the transmission of light. If the gold is pure or but slightly alloyed green rays pass through; when highly alloyed with silver violet rays appear.

As a rule about four hours' beating with a seven pound hammer is required. A single ounce of gold will at this stage trim to about

1,200 leaves three and one-quarter inches square. The finished leaves are taken out of the mold and the rough edges trimmed off by slips of rattan fixed in parallel grooves of an instrument called a wagon, the leaf being laid upon a leather cushion for that purpose.

The leaves are placed in "books" capable of holding twenty-five leaves each, which have been rubbed over with red ochre to prevent the gold from clinging to the paper. The fine gold beaters' skin is the coat of the caecum or blind gut of the ox specially prepared.—Canadian Painter and Decorator.

A Ruskin Thought.

To be content in utter darkness and ignorance is indeed unmanly, and therefore we think that to love and find knowledge must be always right. Yet wherever pride has any share in the work even knowledge and light may be ill pursued. Knowledge is good, and light is good, yet man perished in seeking knowledge, and the moths perish in seeking light, and if we who are crushed before the moth will not accept such mystery as is needful to us we shall perish in like manner. None but the proud will mourn over this, for we may always know more, if we choose, by working on, but the pleasure is, I think, to humble people, in knowing that the journey is endless, the treasure inexhaustible.—Ruskin.

Age of Criminal Responsibility.

In England the law looks upon every one over the age of seven as a responsible being, and every child beyond that age can be prosecuted as a criminal. The same age is accepted in Russia and Portugal. In France and Belgium the age is eight, in Italy and Spain it is nine. Norway, Greece, Austria, Denmark and Holland decline to prosecute a child under ten, and this is the rule also in some of the Swiss cantons. In Germany the limit of responsibility is fixed at twelve.

Timely Advice.

It was during a performance of "Faust" in a provincial town. After the duel Martha, who rushed in at the head of the crowd, raised Valentin's head and held him in her arms during the first part of the scene and exclaimed in evident alarm, "Oh, what shall I do?"

For a moment there was a death-like stillness in the house, when a voice from the gallery suddenly called out, "Unbutton his waist."