

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 Agency—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 do 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 the play lasts a couple of days. Some of them continue a week. They consider a play that lasts only a night a curtain raiser 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 the old Indian style as another figure 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 impenetrable 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 board 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 upturned 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 not."—Boston Transcript.

The more one judges the less one loves. Rainsac.

SECONDHAND GLASS.

Interesting Methods of a Business That Is Quite Extensive.

The salvage glass industry is of such importance and extent that many dealers in secondhand glass specialize in one branch or another. Some, for instance, handle only plate glass that comes to them by reason of the demolition of old buildings, razed to make place for new structures. Salvage glass of this sort brings prices not far below those of new glass.

A considerable quantity of the salvage glass dealer's stock emanates from the plate glass insurance companies. The methods of these companies in taking over glass vary. One concern may keep no stock on hand, simply buying whatever is required to replace a broken pane, disposing of the broken glass, if enough remains to be sold, to the salvage dealer. Sometimes a company will have a warehouse of its own, to which it will remove broken glass that may still be in condition to use. Frequently it will happen that only one corner has been broken from a large pane and that this may be cut down to fit a smaller window.

Most plate glass is insured, but there is much that is not. In the case of an uninsured plate that is broken the owner must, of course, go to a dealer for a new plate. He will sell the broken plate to the salvage dealer. It follows therefore that from insurance companies, from building wreckers and from owners of uninsured glass the salvage glass dealers accumulate great quantities of secondhand plate glass. Much of this is in such a condition that it may be reset anywhere. Should the injury consist, for instance, of simply a deep scratch in the center it is easy to make that plate salable. The secondhand dealer cuts out a strip containing the scratch and thus have left two smaller plates, quite suitable for smaller windows.

When injured plate glass is too much scratched to be available for windows it is sometimes made into ground or frosted glass for office partitions or doors. Salvage plate glass too small for use in windows is employed for the glass doors of refrigerators, and larger pieces are utilized in the making of glass table tops. Small fragments go to the making of hand mirrors, although only clear pieces may be so employed. Other pieces, too small for other purposes, enter into the manufacture of glass signs.

Eventually, when the last piece of merchantable glass has been cut from the damaged piece, there remain the scraps and fragments accumulated in the cutting. Even these have their uses, although they do not bring much. They are melted and used in the manufacture of bottles.—Washington Star.

Men Who Fear Opportunity.
In the American Magazine Hugh B. Fullerton says:

"Thousands of us who are making fairly comfortable livings for families pass plain turning points, refusing to turn or to attack the opening, through sheer timidity. There is no class so timid as the man with a family, who refuses to change because he fears he will risk the small sum he has accumulated to educate the children and provide for the family in case of his death. Ninety-nine out of a hundred men in this class keep straight ahead when they see a turning point clearly."

Not Easy to Explain.

"That boy of mine is always asking questions."

"Oh, well, perhaps he wants to learn something."

"Maybe so, but his inquisitiveness is rather distressing to me at times."

"Yes?"

"He insists on being told what his mother means when she calls me a 'jelly fish,' a 'matrimonial misfit' and a 'human tank.'"—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Keep in Harness Until You Drop.

A prominent Canadian financier in his sixty-fifth year went to England to make a physical examination by a great physician. "You're as sound as a nut," said the doctor. "There's no reason why you shouldn't live to be a hundred—it only you don't stop working."—Woman's Home Companion.

Getting His Orders.

"So you're summoned as a witness, hey? Now you be keeful."

"Keeful about what?"

"I see a fedge rebuked a man for not coming into court with clean hands. Look out for that, and also be keeful to wipe your feet."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Empty but Flattering Title.

Friend of the Family—William, can it be possible that I heard you say "Hello, governor!" to your father? William—Yes; it pleases poor dad. You see, he never really has any say in anything at home; mother's the real executive.—Boston Transcript.

A Revenge Never Enjoyed.

After a stormy attack on Lord Granville on one occasion Lord Randolph Churchill had a stormy passage across the channel and was nearly dead with seasickness. "How Granville would like to see me now!" he gasped.—London Standard.

A Very Old One.

"Sue and her new husband have started on their bridal trip in a veritable ecstasy."
"Is that one of the new makes?"—Baltimore American.

Happiness consists in activity. It is a running stream and not a stagnant pool.—Good.

A WEATHER MYTH

The Idea That the Old Fashioned Winter Was a Fury.

FAMOUS FROSTS WERE RARE.

Records Show That Remarkable Snowstorms and Long Seasons of Hard Freezing Were Not All the Rule. Testimony of Pepps and Evelyn.

Perhaps the greatest of weather myths is the legend of the "old fashioned winter"—that prolonged season of ice and snow which is supposed to have held the land in its grip every year. So firmly has this idea been held for many years that it came as a shock when meteorologists first began to delve into the records of the past and prove its inaccuracy.

There can be no doubt that Charles Dickens, Washington Irving, artists who depicted winter scenes, and, in a later era, the Christmas number and the Christmas card are mainly responsible for the belief that up to about half a century ago the British winters were always extremely severe.

Such records as we possess prove the fallacy of the idea. No records of the weather were kept up to about fifty or sixty years ago, so that we have to rely on the statements of private diaries and old family records, and therefore it takes a lot of research to obtain any data at all.

In olden times no one troubled to make note of average weather, for writing was an art possessed only by few, and writing materials were hard to obtain; hence it is that mention is made only of something unusual, some abnormally mild winter or heavy fall of snow or prolonged frosts.

And when all is said there are comparatively few of the latter, although they were likely to be recorded, while the milder ones would be passed over. A few years ago there were published in France some notes concerning very mild winters in early times. Gregory of Tours tells us that 584 was exceptionally mild, as were the winters of 808, 834, 844 and 1007, when influenza was rife.

Another mild season occurred in 1229, when the birds are said to have hatched their young by February, while the weather journal of the Rev. William Merle, which is in the Bodleian library at Oxford, shows us that during the middle of the fourteenth century the weather was very much as it is now and that mild winters were not uncommon.

There were one or two mild winters during the next hundred years, the most notable one being that of 1493, when barley and corn were in the ear at the end of January. Writings of the sixteenth century have similar testimony to offer, the one or two exceptions only going to prove the rule because they aroused so much comment.

Pepps and Evelyn come to our aid from the middle to the end of the seventeenth century and prove conclusively that the old fashioned winter is a myth. The diaries of these famous writers have been analyzed, and as a result it is found that falls of snow are mentioned only thirteen times over nearly sixty years, while exceptionally heavy storms are referred to only three times.

In the same period there were but six prolonged frosts, and apparently only the famous one of 1693-4 and another a few years later were so severe as the modern ones of 1890-1 and 1895. In January, 1661, Pepps comments on the mild winter, and in December of the following year he notes that he awoke to find the roofs covered with snow, which he had not seen for three years.

Evelyn has the same story to tell—a few hard winters and many mild ones. Such years were 1686-7, Dec. 29. "Little appearance of winter as yet," and 1692-3, Feb. 4. "Hitherto an exceedingly mild winter—an extraordinarily dry and warm season, without frost and like a new spring, such as has not been known for many years."

Here and there we come across references to the weather which are just like the letters written to modern newspapers informing readers that "roses and primroses were in bloom in my garden on Christmas day." Gilbert White's record of the weather between 1783 and 1798 helps to end the myth, for the same number of years at the present day would show pretty much the same sort of weather, as thirteen of the Decembers were mild and wet.

There were mild winters in the beginning of the nineteenth century, as well as one or two severe ones, so that we may rest assured that the "old fashioned winter" was just like the new fashioned ones.—Ernest C. Petherick in London Family Herald.

Stuck to His Rule.

He had just been discharged from the service, owing to wounds, and thought to raise a few pounds by writing his reminiscences of twelve months' fighting. Having completed the manuscript while in hospital, he offered it to a publisher for £500. It was a very small volume, and such a price made the publisher raise his eyes in surprise and inquire the reasons for such a demand. "My dear sir," replied the author, "it has been a point of honor with me, as a soldier, always to sell my life as dear as possible."—London Chronicle.

It is his whole life, not a few incidents of it, that proves the man.—Bover.

DOMESTIC LIFE IN AFRICA.

A Warning to Little Boys Who Would Like to Be Heathens.

I went with my lantern into Ze's little hut, says Jean Kenyon Mackenzie in the Atlantic Monthly. I sat down by the fire, and there was the family too. Mendom was heating some water in a big black kettle. The youngest, Mploga, still without teeth, was howling in the arms of little brother. Presently to the light of my lantern Mendom brings her three-year-old. She empties her hot water into a wooden bowl; with a sponge of crushed leaves she washes first one little foot and then the other. Kid howls.

His feet are sore, poor little duffer! He holds out his hand for his father to hold. Mother is relentless until both feet are soaked; then she opens a little leaf packet. There is salve made of the bark of the redwood tree. She adds a little palm oil to this, and very carefully she anoints the little feet. The sobs subside, and the child walks off on his heels.

Now the mother pours more water into the bowl, takes the fretful baby out of the hands of little brother, stands the weeny thing in her belt of beads on the clay floor and swabs her down with water. There is the familiar initial gasp. With her maternal hands she cleanses that little person all glittering with wet, and she says, looking at me and smiling, "God has sent me much trouble." And the father says, apropos of nothing, "All these have been baptized." I sit on my stool by the fire and feel steeped in the most human domesticity.

Everywhere in the world at this hour little children are whimpering over their evening ablutions. It is a mistake to think that any child of a good mother escapes. So much for the illusions of little boys who would like to be heathens.

COLOR OF SEA WATER.

From Tropical Azure to the Vivid Greens Near the Poles.

Why is the ocean blue? Reflection of the sky, you say. This accounts for some of the color, but not all. It is well known that the tint varies greatly in different localities. Persons taking sea water baths on ocean liners are always surprised by the very noticeable color of their morning tubs.

Color in sea water is largely a matter of saltness and density. In the tropics the tremendous evaporation induced by the blazing sun causes the water to be much saltier than in higher latitudes. For many miles north and south of the equator the water of the world's oceans is a deep blue which fades and changes to green the further one goes toward the poles. In the Arctic and Antarctic oceans the greens are almost as vivid as the tropical azures. China's Yellow sea derives its color partly from the muddy water poured in by its great rivers and partly from small organisms which exist there in numbers which exceed the 120,000,000 living creatures to the square mile found on the average.

The question of salt in water brings up our old friend the Dead sea, which contains 23 per cent of solid matter and, bulk for bulk, is heavier than the human body. Many believe, even in Jerusalem, that bathing in this famous body of water is harmful and swimming impossible. This is not the fact. The chloride of magnesium in the water possesses medicinal qualities if it is not permitted to get into the eyes. It is true that the density of the water renders fast progress in swimming difficult, but the impossibility of sinking more than makes up for it.—Agwi News.

Women and the Arts.

I believe that woman loves the arts better than does man. She is better ground for the development of a great artist, for she approaches art with sympathy, while the great bulk of men approach it with fear and dislike, shrinking from the idea that it may distort their self complacency. The prejudice goes so far that, while women are attracted to artists as lovers, men are generally afraid of women who practice the arts or they dislike them. It is not a question of sex; it is a question of art.—W. L. George in Atlantic.

The Mixture in Havana.

"Havana has just the right mixture of old and new," said one traveler. "I like medieval forts and sixteenth century cathedrals as well as anybody, but when night comes around it is pleasant to return to a cool, up to date hotel, enjoy a well cooked supper and spend the evening walking on the electrically lighted Prado, dancing at the Plaza or Miramar or watching the roof garden novelties."—New York Post.

Polishing a Steel Knife.

If a steel knife is much stained take a piece of raw potato and dip it in powdered bath brick, advises the Scientific American. Rub the blade of the knife well with this and then dip it in hot water and wipe dry. You will be surprised at the brilliancy of the steel.

Serious.

"Do you think his intentions are serious?"
"They must be. It cost him \$3.75 taxi fare to bring me home from the party the other night, and he asked me if he couldn't call again."—Detroit Free Press.

His Term.

"Have you been married for long?" asked the gabby party.
"No," responded his neighbor, "just life."—Buffalo Express.



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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 Aristotle, as follows: Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-247 B. C.) when engaged in making a collection of the laws of all nations fo-

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 Aristæus 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 buhle, which stands for the English lover. The harsher use of the word is, however, to be traced to bel low, the root of bull, with a significance of noisy blustering.

Shopping Troubles.

"Tomorrow is my wife's birthday, and I want to buy a present that will tickle her."

"We have a nice line of feather boas."

"No, no. I mean something that would make a hit with her."

"Anything in hammers?"

"You misunderstand. I want something striking that."

"Ah, you wish a clock."

"That's all."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Royal Nicknames.

Louis XIV was "Le Grand Monarque." His court was the model for European princes.

Louis Philippe was the "Citizen King;" at one time he was "King Smith," the name he assumed when he escaped from France.

Mary, queen of Scots, was the "White Queen."

Mary of Modena, wife of James II, was the "Queen of Tears."

The "Nine Days' Queen" was Lady Jane Grey.

Christian III, of Denmark was the "Father" of his people.