

ODDITIES IN JAPAN

Natives Have a Topsy Turvy Way of Doing Many Things.

BATHING IS A SACRED RITE.

And Whenever a Native Has a Moment to Spare He Resorts to the Tub, With Its Peculiar Code of Ethics, Houses Without Windows.

I just can't get used to how turned around, upside down, inside out, topsy turvy, things are in Japan. A Japanese carpenter draws the plane toward himself, and a blacksmith sits down to work.

A Japanese blacksmith never knows the joys of getting tickets to the circus, for he hasn't any place for the advance man to paste up his three sheets. The whole front of a Japanese blacksmith shop is open, with other buildings jammed up so close on each side that the circus man couldn't get a poster in.

A Japanese book begins on our last page and finishes on our first paragraph. And their sentences begin at the top of the page and read down, like long columns of figures. They wear white to funerals and judge poetry by the beauty of the handwriting.

Japanese houses haven't any chimneys, so you may see a whole plateau of houses with not a single curl of smoke as far as the eye can reach. The Japanese cooking is done outside the house in a little charcoal stove. They have no stoves to keep themselves warm, only little hibachis, galton jars with charcoal in them covered with fine ashes. There isn't enough heat in one to stage a miller, and whenever they get too cold they take a warm bath.

Bathing is a sacred rite. Whenever they have a spare moment they run and take a bath. When business is dull they hurry to a public bathhouse and jump in. If they miss one train they take a bath while waiting for the next. They take hot baths—steaming, sizzling hot. And the strange thing is they don't do the bathing in a tub. They have little foot baths about the size of crocks that they use for washing themselves, and when they are thoroughly clean they climb into the tub.

If you should get into the tub first the proprietor would break into tears and tell you that you were bankrupting him, for the same water is used all evening, no difference how many guests the hotel has.

After soaking awhile they crawl out, steaming all over, gently blot themselves, get into kimonos and sit around bare ankles. One would think that before the evening was over a feet-footed runner would have to be dispatched for medical assistance, but instead of that they never catch cold!

When I got here and was invited into a Japanese home I found that they hadn't any chairs. In fact, there isn't a stick of furniture a foot high in a Japanese house. You have to sit on the floor. A person of my build was never meant for sitting on the floor. When I get down on the floor and try to draw up to a Japanese table my feet are so in the way that I can't get up to where there is anything doing. The waitress has to walk around my feet to bring me the vials. By the time the meat is over she is pretty well fagged out.

A Japanese house hasn't a single window. And it's only the most stylish of houses that have a pane of glass. A person who has a pane of glass somewhere in his house sets the social pace in that neighborhood. Instead of glass they have paper pasted on sliding frames, and through the paper the light filters. Naturally one wonders how they keep the rain out. This is little trouble, for outside the paper walls are a series of wooden doors, which also slide back and forth.

When time comes to retire you look around for the bed, but there isn't one in sight. It is rolled up in a drawer, and the Japanese wouldn't know a bedstead from a quilting frame. Millions of people in Japan have grown to manhood, voted, paid taxes and gone to their reward without ever having clasped eyes on an American bedstead.

To make the bed ready the servant opens the drawer and unrolls the quilts on the floor, pushing a tomato can looking thing under one end for a pillow. Then she shuts all the paper windows and pulls to all the wooden slides so that not a breath of air can get in and the bed is ready. Money in the palm wouldn't persuade a Japanese to sleep with the window open.

Their theory is that during the day the air becomes full of dust and germs so that if you keep your windows sealed during the night none of the germs can get in.—Homer Croy in Leslie's.

Queer Spelling. Jack was looking over the dictionary and once he laughed aloud. "Why are you laughing?" asked Dot. "Is your book interesting?" "No, not interesting," answered Jack. "But amusing. It spells words so different from the way I spell them."—Sacramento Union.

Might Take the House. "How do you like built in furniture?" "First rate. In fact, it has one great advantage." "And what is that?" "Instinctive men can't come and move it out."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Whatever disgrace we have merited, it is almost always in our power to re-establish our reputation.—La Rochefoucauld.

MANHATTAN ISLAND.

It Was Once a Spot Apart From the Island of Manhattan.

The Magazine of American History has called attention to a distinction in New York nomenclature that, despite the authority it quotes, "every Manhattanese" does not know. The magazine cites the following footnote to "The Spy," by James Fenimore Cooper and then comments on it:

"Every Manhattanese knows the difference between Manhattan Island and the island of Manhattan. The first is applied to a small district in the vicinity of Corlear's Hook, while the last embraces the whole island, or the city and county of New York as it is termed in the laws.

"In other words, the latter is the present borough of Manhattan. Manhattan Island was a knoll along the old water front of the East river about an acre in extent surrounded by creeks and salt marsh and made an island by the tide. Near it was Henry Eckford's shipyard, an ancient landmark. It may be identified on General Egbert L. Viele's map of the water courses.

"In the reticulation of the present streets it lay between Livingston and Houston, Sherif and Cannon streets, Columbia and Stanton streets intersect on what was about the center of the island. Just north of it was one of the tidal mouths of a stream that arose near First avenue on Sixth street, flowed through Tompkins square and reached the river between Manhattan Island and Burnt Mill or Branda Muhl Point, about Third and Lewis streets."

ALASKA'S FERTILE LANDS.

Facts About Our Vast and Little Understood Territory.

Alaska is the most misunderstood and misrepresented section of the United States. People generally, and sincerely, believe that the name Alaska is synonymous with snow and ice and couple it accordingly with ice cream freezers and cold drinks. Yet the principal cities of Alaska along its southern coast line—Juneau, Ketchikan, Cordova, Valdez and Seward—do not average as cold in midwinter as New York and are seldom as cold as Baltimore and Washington during cold waves.

Alaska is one-fifth the size of the whole United States, and its prodigious area of about 600,000 square miles, nearly three times the size of the German empire, spreads from the temperate zone to the arctic circle. Not one-quarter of it is in the latter. Below the circle lies a magnificent belt of fertile soil.

It is estimated by government authorities that the agricultural area of Alaska's fertile valleys and plains, on many of which cattle can be wintered without feeding, aggregate 30,000 square miles, with a climate like that of northern Europe—Norway, Finland and Sweden. This land is richer and more productive than that of any other country in the world, well watered, fairly well timbered, and 320 acres are open free to the settler if he wishes to take up a homestead.—John A. Sletcher in Leslie's.

The Story of "Hard Hit."

"Mr. Orchardson, if I caught that by killing you I could paint a picture like yours I would stab you to the heart." Such was the remark made by the artist, the famous caricaturist, to the Royal academician, Sir William Orchardson, when at a private view he first saw "Hard Hit," the picture of the ruined gambler. "It was," said the artist, "the greatest compliment I could have had." Curiously enough, the model who sat for the ruined gambler was rather fond of cards himself. One day the artist noticed that he looked somewhat depressed. "What is the matter?" he asked. "I was awfully hard hit last night," he answered. "By love," replied the artist, jumping up with delight. "I've got it at last! 'Hard Hit,' of course." And that is how the picture got its name.

Where Shelley Was Drowned.

Spezia, the principal naval station of Italy, and about fifty miles southeast of Genoa, described as "the Portsmouth of Italy," has interesting literary associations. It calls up memories of Byron, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Charles Lever and Mary Somerville. Lever was in residence at Spezia intermittently for some years, and there wrote three of his books. But a more tragic interest is attached to the magnificent bay, for it will be recalled that it was while sailing in a new boat across the gulf to his home at Lerici that Shelley was drowned.

Musical Note.

"What opera did you hear last night?" "Cecil had the program, and he said it was Libretto." "How amusing!" "Yes, wasn't it? Because it really wasn't Libretto at all."—Harvard Lampoon.

Bullets and Snow.

To test the penetration of rifle shots snow walls six feet six inches thick were erected in Aurillac, France. Rifles were fired at a distance of fifty yards. In each case the ball was stopped at a penetration of five and a half feet.

Easy to Guess.

A woman writer says girls ought to know what their lemons make. Don't they? Unless times have changed the girls get three-fourths of it during the courtship and make a clean sweep after the wedding.—Houston Post.

Advertisement for Royal Club Coffee. Features a large image of a coffee tin and text: 'FINE GRADE HIGHER! We Have Saved Coffee Drinkers Thousands of Dollars This Year Now Prices Go Up - One year ago when we reduced the price on ROYAL CLUB COFFEE from 40c to 35c, we told you it was only temporary... UNTIL JANUARY 1ST YOU CAN BUY ROYAL CLUB COFFEE AT THE REDUCED PRICE. 5 Pound 30¢ The Pound. After Jan. 1st 5lbs \$1.75'

FAKED VENTRILOQUISM.

The Deception Made Possible by the Loud Speaking Telephone.

A great deal of ventriloquism is not ventriloquism at all. In fact, the modern wonder in this line of pleasant and deceptive art needs to have none of the old time ventriloquist's ability at all. He may—and often does—stand on the opposite side of the stage from his mannikin and puff a cigar quite contentedly, to the amazement of the audience. The dummy answers with a ready line of repartee, delivered in stentorian tones. Nor is that all, for he turns and twists his head, waves his arms, kicks up his feet and otherwise acts in a very lifelike manner.

The secret of the dummy's voice is the loud speaking telephone and of his actions various electric magnets. As may be guessed, both are operated by some one off the stage. In order to produce all the desired effects the dummy figure is fitted inside with a loud speaking telephone receiver, with the horn or large mouthpiece pointing toward the audience. The receiver is connected with a special transmitter in an anteroom some distance away. An ordinary operator's breast transmitter is also concealed in the body of the dummy, so that whatever is said by the ventriloquist on the stage is transmitted to the operator in the anteroom, enabling him to speak for the dummy at the proper time.—Argonaut.

WONDERS OF THE ALPS.

Changes Nature Wrought to Uplift Their Towering Peaks.

Nothing in the world's history is more impressive than the story of the Alps. Ten or twelve million years ago, possibly far more, a long unseen line of weakness, a crack of fissure in the earth's crust, stretched away from France eastward hundreds of miles. On this line followed huge volcanic outbursts.

Next ensued a vast slow subsidence, which went on through geologic epochs until where Mount Blanc now rears its summit 15,780 feet was a sea fringing an old continent. Large rivers emptied into it. Deposits of mud, sand, gravel were laid one on another as the sinking went on until the layers became 50,000 feet, nearly ten miles, thick. Then at last commenced a great up-

lifting; the struggling subterranean forces raised a huge load. For ages this went on until the rocks, crumpled, crushed, contorted, rose above the waters and continued to rise, forming lines of mountain chains and making Switzerland a tableland.

Every hour since then rain and snow, river, glacier and avalanche have been sculpturing into peaks and carving into lakes and valleys that vast platform with its recent sedimentary covering and primordial granite core.

The Old Turnpikes.

The first great American highway, that between New York and Philadelphia, was long known as "the old York road." Its construction in 1711 was an example which led the colonists at other points along the Atlantic seaboard to construct similar roads where there were no water routes. They were usually built by chartered companies and were called turnpikes or toll roads. Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New Jersey had many roads of the kind. The first macadam road in America was built in 1792 between Philadelphia and Lancaster. In 1811 there were said to be 4,500 miles of chartered turnpikes in New England and New York. During the next twenty years the national government spent many millions of dollars in constructing great highways, but the panic of 1837 and the building of railroads and canals put an end to that branch of government work.

CORK FORESTS.

Money Making Trees That Grow in the Poorest Kind of Soil.

The cork oak is a kind of Jack at all trades, among trees, and its service in dunes well the kind of new freedom that trees may give us by their new helpfulness if we will just give them a chance. If the garden of Eden story had been written in Spain or Portugal I think the fortunate couple would have been placed in possession of a cork forest. If a man in either of those countries has a forest of good cork trees you will find him in Madrid, Lisbon or Paris. His cork forest works for him, and he stays in town. Cork trees grow on the rockiest and poorest land. The poorer the land the

finer the quality of the cork. Every eight or ten years the outer bark is stripped from the trees to furnish the ever more highly prized cork of commerce. By dividing the land up into blocks this seasonal harvest will produce a fairly regular income.

These same oak trees produce acorns, often heavily, which are sold to some farmer, who drives his herds of lean hogs into the forest, where they harvest the acorns and turn them into salable meat. A Portuguese hog is expected to gain two pounds a day for ninety days when acorns are ripe.

More than this, there is beneath the oak trees some herbage fit for goats to eat. Thus the cork forest owner in Lisbon gets income from three contractors—the cork stripper, the pork raiser and the goat raiser. And with care the forest lasts forever. The individual cork tree is good for a hundred years or more, after which it is a fine big salable tree, with enough young ones near it to take its place when it is gone to market. In Portugal a cork tree, ready for its third stripping, is considered worth \$25. When in full bearing an acre of these oaks will yield from one to three tons of cork at a stripping, now worth about \$70 a ton to the grower. Most of this is profit. The pork is profit. It is the common rule that the income from the pasture pays the small cost of caring for the forest.—J. Russell Smith in Country Gentleman.

CUTTING THE CABLES.

How It is Done in Wartime in Deep and Shallow Waters.

Cutting submarine cables in wartime is by no means so easy a job as it sounds. Briefly the method is as follows: The cruiser detailed for the work steams slowly at right angles to the cable route, dragging after her a special kind of grapnel, like a five pronged anchor with shears attached, which grip and cut the cable at the same time. This grapnel is connected with the cable cutting ship by a strong rope formed of strands of steel and hemp interwoven, and attached to which is an instrument called a dynamometer, that shows when the cable is hooked. By steaming once or twice backward and forward the cable can be cut in two places at, say, half a mile apart,

and the severed portion can then be dragged away by another kind of snuff-cutting grapnel and left lying on the ocean bed at some distance away, where it is, of course, impossible to locate it, rendering any attempt to repair the damage a very difficult and laborious operation.

Such is the usual method adopted for destroying an enemy's cable in comparatively shallow seas. In the case of ocean cables submerged at great depths, however, the mode of procedure is somewhat different.

A similar five pronged grapnel is used, but it is a noncutting one and simply grips the cable, holding it fast. The fact that it has been hooked is, of course, notified to those on board by the dynamometer, when the ship is immediately stopped and the cable hoisted up toward the surface.

It never reaches the surface, however, for presently the lifting strain becomes too great, the cable snaps of its own accord, and the two ends flying wide apart, the severed cable settles back to the ocean bottom obliquely, leaving a gap of possibly a thousand yards or more between the portions.—Pearson's Weekly.

Selling a Masterpiece.

Millet, who was a farmer's son, having in mind his boyhood, tenderly painted his wonderful "Angelus." He took it to Paris and hawked it about, but no one would have it. At last the Belgian minister gave him \$300 for it. Six years after Millet's death the picture sold for \$32,000, and in 1880 James F. Sullivan, president of the American Art Association, bought it for \$116,000.—New York Telegram.

A Financier.

"Look here, Jimmison," said Brocklebank. "I'm terribly mortified about not having paid back that dollar I borrowed of you last June, but honestly, old man—" "Oh, that's all right, Brock," said Jimmison. "Don't speak of it." "Oh, but I must speak of it, old man," said Brocklebank. "I can't treat a friend that way, you know, and I want to pay you, and I will, Jimmison. If you'll lend me \$2 I'll pay off that dollar right now, and we can start fresh again."—New York Times.