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Their Kismet.

Proverbs, like grammatical rules, are liable to exceptions. For instance, the familiar saying, "Lightning does not strike twice in the same place," had its exception during the bombardment of Widin by the Russian batteries of Kalafat on the opposite shore of the Danube. The incident is described by Dr. Ryan in his book, "Under the Red Crescent," the Turkish equivalent for the Red Cross society.

The shells from the heavy siege guns at Kalafat were dropping incessantly within the fortress. One of them as it exploded tore a great hole in the ground large enough to contain a horse. A Turkish woman, who was cowering with her three children under the shadow of the tower of minarets, it was the least likely spot to be again hit by a shell. But scarcely had she crept in and drawn the three children after her when another shell, leaving the cannon's mouth at Kalafat, nearly two miles away, dropped into the same hole and blew mother and children to atoms. To the Turks the grim exception was a vivid illustration of their doctrine of kismet, or fate. The woman's hour had come; kismet led her into that hole; it was the place assigned for her departure from earth.

Another shell struck the angle of a house, tore down the walls and reduced one half of a room to ruins. In the other half of the room were a Turkish woman and two children. They were not even hurt. Their kismet, according to Turkish ideas, saved them.

Embraced by a Devil Fish.

A diver engaged in Moyno river in Australia had a terrible experience with a sea devil. Having fired off a charge of dynamite and displaced a large quantity of stones he went to the bottom of the river and while engaged in rolling over a large stone he saw something moving about in front of him. This object quickly came in contact with him and coiled about his arm. The diver walked slowly and painfully along with the sea devil's feelers twined about his body and legs. He made tracks for the ladder and gained the boat, a curious looking object indeed, with this huge ugly thing entangled about his body. With the help of the sailors he was in time freed from his submarine companion. The body of the octopus was only about the size of a large soup plate, with eyes like a sheep's, but it possessed nine arms, each four feet in length, at the butt as thick as a man's wrist and tapering off at the end like a penknife. All along the under part of the feelers of this strange sea creature are suckers every quarter of an inch, giving it immense power.

How Japanese Woo.

Japan is a long way off and this charming story of bow courtships are carried on among the elite of their society comes to us from this faraway land. In certain districts in houses wherein resides a daughter of marriageable age, an empty flowerpot is encircled by a string and suspended from a window or the veranda. In stead of serenades by moonlight and other delicate ways of making an impression, it is etiquette for the Japanese lover to approach the dwelling of his sweetheart bearing some choice plant in his hand, which he reverently proceeds to plant in the empty vase. This takes place when he is fully aware the mother and daughter are at home.

Instead of placing a plant in the flowerpot is equivalent to a formal proposal to the lady of his choice. The lover, having settled the plant to his mind, retires, and the lady is free to act as she pleases. If he is the right man, she takes every care of his gift, waters it and tends it carefully with her own hands, that all may see that the donor is accepted as a suitor. But if he is not the favorite, if the stern parents object, the poor plant is torn from the vase and the next morning lies limp and withered on the veranda or in the path below.

Mellowing Superstitions.

Mr. Elbert Hubbard, speaking of Meissonier in The Philistine, says that the temperament of the painter's mother "was poetic, religious and her spirit had in it a touch of superstition—which is the case with all really excellent women."

Mr. Hubbard is right. A child cannot be handicapped more severely than by a mathematically precise, "clear headed," well informed, unimaginative mother. There are wretched households in which fairy stories are tabooed as "absurd," in which the "Arabian Nights" is pook pooked, in which primers of science are forced upon little hands in which there is no Santa Claus, no stork, no werewolf, no goblin.

A superstitious mother sees signs and omens for her children. To find her throwing spilled salt over her shoulder or looking anxiously for the favoring position of the new moon is a more agreeable sight than to discover her in the act of teaching indisputable facts. We entertain a profound pity for men who sneer at old wives' fables. The testimony, the deepest feeling of the centuries, is against the scoffers and with them we do not care to clink glasses or do business.—Boston Journal.

Horseshoes.

In Japan most of the horses are shod with straw. Even the clumsiest of cart horses wear straw shoes, which, in their cases, are tied around the ankle with straw rope and are made of the ordinary rice straw twisted together to form a sole for the foot about half an inch thick. These soles cost about a halfpenny a pair. In Iceland horses are shod with sheep's horns. In discussing this subject a writer in The Horse-shoer's Journal says: In the valley of the Upper Oxus the antlers of the mountain deer are used for the same purpose, the shoes being fastened with horn pins. In the Sudan the horses are shod with socks made of camel's skin. In Australia horseshoes are made of cowhide. A German not long ago invented a horseshoe of paper, prepared by saturating with oil, turpentine and other ingredients. Thin layers of such paper are glued to the hoof till the requisite thickness is attained, and the shoes thus made are durable and impenetrable by moisture.

A Policeman.

The Golden Penny tells an amusing story—some readers may think it improbable—concerning the examination of a young man who desired to be appointed a member of the Hampshire county (England) police.

He put in an appearance one morning, accompanied by his mother and was taken in hand for examination by the inspector. This progressed satisfactorily until the inspector observed:

"Of course you're aware you'll have a lot of night work to do! You are not afraid of being out late, I suppose?"

Before the candidate could reply his mother electrified the amazed official with the statement:

"That'll be all right, sir. His grandmother's going round with him the first two or three nights until he gets used to it!"

The Better Drawer.

"Your money or your life!" cried the robber. "Ha, ha!" laughed the artist, and drew a pistol. The artist had no money, and, according to theorists, not much life, but that was why he laughed. He laughed because he belonged to the school which awes rapidly and boldly rather than the school which draws laboriously, with great attention to detail.—Detroit Journal.

It is said that so difficult is the art of cutting gloves that most of the principal cutters are known to be trade by name and by fame.

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