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Brick From Dirt.

Compressed bricks made from ordinary dirt have been developed for house construction by two French engineers. In the process ordinary subsoil earth containing 5 to 8 per cent clay is compressed by tremendous pressure. The bricks are said to withstand a pressure of 600 pounds a square inch.

Pioneer Balloonist.

Jean Pierre Blanchard, a Frenchman, made the first balloon ascension in this country. At ten o'clock on the morning of January 9, 1793, the balloon arose from the Prison court, Philadelphia. President Washington was among the spectators.

Three Classes Favored.

"Sleeping sickness," the disease whose origin has so far defied scientists, attacks people, irrespective of age or sex, the lowest number of cases occurring among publicans, "vagabonds" and dairymen.—Exchange.

"Mugwump" Defined.

In political parlance a "mugwump" is a man with no fixed beliefs or party affiliations. Horace Porter in the Cleveland-Hill campaign of 1884 perpetrated a bonnet that became famous when he said, "A mugwump is a person educated beyond his intellect."

Origin of Bachelor.

The word "bachelor" is derived from an old word for "cowherd." A bachelor, or cowherd, stood lowest in the social scale, and the term therefore came to be applied to men who had not yet reached the full dignity of manly responsibility.

Disadvantage of Middle Age.

Another thing about middle age, or worse, is that while you may admire the primroses along the path of dalliance just as much as ever, you don't feel so much like stooping and picking them.—Ohio State Journal.

Confusion in Terms.

Only a doctor's customers are "patients," while a lawyer's are "clients," in spite of the fact that having a lawyer takes more patience than anything else in the world.—Boston Transcript.

Ancient Air Gilder.

According to recent claims of the Royal Aeronautical society, Solomon gave to the son of the queen of Sheba a machine that is believed to have been an air glider.

Egotism.

It is only when a man is complimented that he thinks he is seeing himself as others see him.—Boston Transcript.

Biggest Geyser Regions.

Next to Yellowstone National park the most important geyser region in the world is at Rotorua in New Zealand.

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P. N. U. No. 3, 1925

THE MYSTERY OF CHIN FOO

By ROX BURY

(© by Short Story Pub. Co.)

Here's a ghost story from the Orient where the swollen Yangtze river bears its burden of Chinamen. Three listeners to a yarn of a haunted house doubt its authenticity and make a fearful discovery.

IF THE first mate of the Sally J. had possessed more respect for the superstitions of the Orient and less love for practical jokes he would have counted ten before sending three adventure-seeking landlubbers on what he felt certain was a wild goose chase for a supposed ghost that was said to exist in a decaying house.

He was a short, heavy-built man—this mate—with flabby jaws and a thick red neck. He was that seemingly incompatible combination of bravery and brutality.

It was the second visit in as many years of the Sally J. to Chin Foo, a small town some 50 miles up the great swollen Yangtze river.

The thick-necked mate of the vessel lounged on the rail watching a boat with the three men glide steadily towards the shore not 200 yards away. Suddenly it was lost behind a sampan, and was next seen edging its way among some houseboats that crowded the shore.

The stench from the town floated out over the water with the incessant chatter of the almond-eyed natives. This, mingled with the clack of ducks, so grated on the man's nerves that he went into the cabin. He had little use for the country and less for its people. It reminded him of one big, disease-ridden mud hole.

"The ghost of Chin Foo," so he had told the three, "was the product of a cold, brutal midnight murder. The victim was an aged Englishman in the employ of the British government. On the outskirts of the town he erected a two-story frame house where he resided with his daughter as his sole companion. His official duties gave him little work, with the consequent result that his inactivity soon aroused the suspicion of the natives to the belief that he was enormously wealthy."

"One night, shortly after he had retired, his daughter heard a rush of feet across the floor above her head; a startled cry from her father, which was followed by a heavy thud on the floor. Realizing that something was amiss she seized the lamp and a revolver, and hurried up the stairs."

"The first object that met her gaze was the body of her aged parent prone on the floor and face downward. A thin stream of blood spurted from his throat which had been cut from ear to ear. She did not faint, but examined the wound and saw that death was but a matter of a few moments. The blade had been keen and cut through to the vertebrae. She glanced at the open window and surmised what had happened."

"The place had been entered by thieves seeking the supposed wealth of her father, and he had come upon them in the act of searching the room. To further strengthen her theory she saw his hands were covered with oil. She did what she could to stop the little stream of crimson that flowed from his throat, then went to the window and fired two shots from the revolver in hopes of attracting attention. This done she closed the window and went down stairs."

"A few days later the body was placed in a metallic casket and conveyed to England. That was four years ago, but the girl never returned, while the ghost was said to be there every night to play his part! The rush of feet across the floor; the brief struggle; the agonized cry; the heavy thud of the falling body, and his turn was over."

That was the story told to the three by the mate, who laughed at their errand. It was the way it had been told to him, and he passed it on for what it was worth.

"I'm afraid the mate's been stringing us," growled the leader of the trio. "He didn't say he ever heard it, Jim," piped up Shorty. "He just got it from some of these Chinks, and I reckon he don't believe it himself."

They found the place just as they were told it was left four years ago. It was a gloomy house standing against the sky line, a lone sentinel. It was surrounded by a heavy wooden picket fence, and what had once been a gravel walk was now overgrown with weeds. The place was locked, but they had little trouble in getting into the house.

The room they first entered had evidently been the parlor. A large rocking chair with a leather seat was covered with mold, while the upholstery of the other pieces had fallen prey to mice and insects.

"Just the place for ghosts," remarked Jim in a whisper. His companions nodded their heads.

A bat, disturbed by the intruders, beat the air above them and they ducked instinctively. The glitter of the candle seemed to blind it, but it finally managed to escape through the open window, much to the relief of the three.

"Let's beat it," suggested Shorty, but the other two ignored his remarks and went ahead.

Under the leadership of Jim they entered the next room. It was altogether different from the one they had just left. The dampness and a sweet sickish odor filled the room.

"Optim!" observed Jim.

"It's fresh, too," declared Shorty.

"That's funny," said the professor. "I never heard tell of a hop-smoking Chink having any fondness for ghosts."

A search of the room revealed absolutely nothing but a few old rag carpets that had been drawn up in front of the open fireplace.

Jim poked among the ashes with a stick. They were hot!

"That beats 'em!" he snapped. "There is somebody in this house."

They next searched upstairs but could find nothing of consequence. One of the rooms they could not enter, but took it for granted it was deserted like the rest. Their curiosity satisfied, they tramped down the stairs, and soon had a bright fire blazing on the hearth. It was a good protection against the raw east wind that had sprung up since they entered the place. Squatting about the fire they solved the mystery of Chin Foo in a dozen different ways.

But the fumes of opium and the warmth of the fire soon carried them far away from Chin Foo.

Jim was the first to awake; he did not know what had aroused him, but was conscious of someone near besides his companions. The fire had died down, and the intense silence made him nervous. He listened intently.

There was someone near the window not ten feet away!

Then he heard it plainly; the snapping of underbrush and the tread of feet. Then the silence again.

He leaned over and poked his two companions with a stick. He was all action now, and had hardly finished arousing his companions when there was a heavy stamping of feet above; a wild cry and next a brief struggle. Then the heavy thud of a falling body.

"Quick!" he commanded. "Light that candle and follow me!"

When they reached the top of the stairs they discovered that the room where the noise came from was the one that was locked.

"Put your shoulders to it!" again commanded Jim. "Now then, all together!"

The door gave way and the three fell sprawling into the room. The candle was extinguished by a draft from an open window, and they were left in darkness.

"I've lost it," whispered Shorty. "Find it! Quick!"

Jim searched for it, and as he felt about the floor his hand came in contact with something warm and slimy that sent a chill through him. Next he felt a body!

"By God's sake light a match," he begged.

It seemed ages before the candle was recovered, and several matches went out in their excited attempts to light it. When the little flame finally struggled to a steady light, the first thing that met their eyes was a body sprawled at full length on the floor at their feet. It was the body of a white man!

The muscles of his hands twitched, and a small dark stream trickled from his throat across the floor towards the three men, who drew back instinctively and shuddered. The face of the man was turned away.

"This will never do," said Jim in a tone shaky enough for a sepulchre.

Jim leaned over the body and turned the head towards the glare of the light. As the ghastly features were revealed Jim dropped back.

It was the first mate of the Sally J. Jim's two companions huddled nearer the door.

Placing the candle in his hat to hide the glare from his own eyes, Jim threw a ray of light about the room. In the corner huddled two Chinamen. One of them held a blood-stained knife.

It did not take Jim and his two companions long to realize what had happened. They soon had the pair bound hand and foot. This accomplished, they went to the window for a breath of fresh air, and found an old ladder leaning against the side of the house just below the sill. It was the final clue. The mate had attempted to play a practical joke, and had come upon the two frightened robbers, who, thinking he was some intruder, promptly slit his throat.

Before the Sally J. left port, the ghost of Chin Foo had claimed two more lives; those of the two coolies, who had used the old consul's home, after murdering its owner, as a place to hide their loot. They knew they never would be molested as long as it was rumored that a ghost occupied the place, but they failed to reckon on the curiosity of the Anglo-Saxon.

John Gilpin Declared to Be Real Character

John Gilpin was a citizen of London and a "train-band captain," a "train-band" being a volunteer militia organization common in England and especially in London 200 years ago. John Gilpin's adventures while riding a horse that ran away with him are related in the humorous poem entitled "The Diverting History of John Gilpin," showing how he went farther than he intended and came safe home again." The story was related to Cowper by a Mrs. Austen, who remembered to have heard it in her childhood. The poem first appeared anonymously in the Public Adviser, in 1782 and was first published as Cowper's avowed production in the second volume of his poems.

"John Gilpin" is said to have been a linen draper named Bayer, excessively polite, whose shop stood on a corner of Cheapside, London.

The poet, William Cowper, lived from 1731 to 1800. He was a timid, melancholy man, and at times his mind gave way. He was a ripe scholar and endowed with creative genius of a high order. Most of his writings are of a serious nature, often of a highly religious tone. Several of his hymns are to be found in the collections used by the churches today.

POULTRY

FIRST REQUIREMENT FOR SANITARY COOP

The first requirement for a sanitary hen house is a roomy, dry building with plenty of window space and easy means of ventilation.

Dropping boards under the roosts are quite essential for the proper maintenance of cleanliness. They should be made of tongued and grooved flooring well laid, and should be at least three feet above the floor of the house. If nests are under the dropping boards, three feet six inches would be better height. In the case of heavy breeds runways up to the roosting perches should be used, but with leghorns and other light breeds they are not necessary.

Dropping boards should be level, and the perches arranged about six inches above them. The perches should be on a level, also, and of 2 by 2 material. They should be fastened to 2 by 4 supports that are hinged at the back end of the house so that the roosts can be raised out of the way while scraping the dropping boards.

A hoe with 15 or 18-inch blade is very satisfactory for scraping the dropping boards, and if used regularly once or twice a week will assist materially in maintaining the health of the flock. A small box arranged to hang from and slide along the front edge of the dropping board platform, to receive the droppings as they are scraped from the board, will help to preserve the fertilizer for the garden.

One nest should be provided for each five or six birds, and even more if trap nests are used. Twelve by twelve inches is large enough and one-fourth inch mesh hardware cloth is excellent for the bottom. Wall nests are to be preferred to those located under the dropping platform, but the wall nests require a top place at an angle of at least 45 degrees, to prevent the chickens roosting on them. The runways along the front of the nests can also be made to fold up in front of the nest openings, which will keep the young birds from roosting in the nests at night and fouling them.

Dry mash hoppers are essential to the economical feeding of the flock; they should be raised on legs 18 inches to 2 feet from the floor.

Water stands should be raised the same as the mash hoppers, and are best made with a slatted top in the middle of which an opening is left to receive a 12-quart pail. The support for the bucket should be about six inches lower than the top of the platform.

A broody coop where feverish hens can be confined and fed is much to be preferred to ducking them or to starvation.

A catching coop is very desirable and almost necessary where any regular and consistent effort at culling is attempted. A heavy wire with one end bent to form a hook and the other end tied to an old broom handle is useful in catching a bird or two, as occasion may demand.

A bin where two or three hundred pounds of scratch grain may be stored in the chicken house is also a labor saver.

Details as to the construction of different items mentioned above must of course vary with the size of the flock and local conditions.

Difficult to Determine

Sex of Goose or Gander

Geese are usually a little larger and coarser than geese. The head of the gander is apt to be larger and the neck thicker. The cry of the goose is rather harsh, while the gander makes a shrill cry. The only accurate way is examination of the organs, or observation of the flock at mating time.

Laying ability of geese depends on the breed and the individuals. Toulouse geese will usually average about twenty eggs, and some produce thirty to thirty-five. White Chinese geese will lay from fifty to one hundred eggs. The Emdens are not generally quite as good layers as Toulouse, although very similar.

The lameness may be due to rheumatism caused by spending the night in a damp roosting place. Goings sometimes become lame, due to faulty feeding methods caused by lack of mineral matter or animal feed in the ration.

Early Hatching Favored

Hatching in March and April instead of May and June has several advantages. In the first place, the early hatches do not meet the strenuous competition of chicks that are incubated by hens later in the season. The incubator can be made to yield more profitable returns by running it during the early months when farm work has not become heavy.

Value of Sorghum Hay

According to analysis, ordinary sorghum cane hay should be worth about the same or slightly less than timothy hay for dairy cows. Actually, it is really a better roughage for dairy cows than timothy hay. At any rate the cows seem to find it more palatable. Like timothy hay, sorghum fodder is somewhat lacking in protein and, on that account, it is necessary to feed just a little more in the way of bran and oil meal with it than with such roughages as clover or alfalfa.

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Aged Apple Trees.

The apple tree is the longest lived of American fruit trees. In many parts of the East it is not unusual to find trees healthy and bearing fruit at the age of one hundred years.

Gold Far Below Ground.

The greatest depth at which gold has as yet been excavated from the earth is 4,200 feet (about three-fourths of a mile, in the New Chums mine in Australia.

Love for Animals

Interest in animals is so natural with children that it is usually a simple matter to teach love and sympathy for them even where it does not already exist. In presenting an animal that is "new," teachers have splendid opportunity to train powers of observation and to supply a class with a mine of material, says Nature Magazine. The otter as a fur bearer, as the courageous protector of his life and liberty, as a fisherman, and as a special stunt artist is bound to delight children. Take them to see live otters if possible.

Culling Condemned Ewes

In culling out condemned ewes condemnation is an important consideration because two-thirds the yearly return from a ewe is from the lamb she produces. Blockiness, level rump, a well-filled leg of mutton, and well sprung ribs associated with a wide muzzle are outstanding points to be looked for. Broken mouths and spoiled udders are sufficient to justify getting rid of a breeding ewe. Her ability to produce a good lamb should also be considered.

Males with frosted combs and wattles will require four to six weeks to entirely recover. If your birds are badly frosted the first of January, good fertility cannot be expected before the first of February.

The chief value of sprouted oats comes from its green or succulent condition. It does not contain a greater aggregate amount of nutriment, but presents this nutriment in a form that is more digestible and satisfies the fowl's need for green food.

Calves from heavy milking cows should be weaned gradually. If they are running with the cows the weaning should be begun by keeping them up and allowing them to suck only twice each day for five or six days.

Dairy bulls should have plenty of water. This matter is often neglected especially when there is not a constant supply in the stall or pen and when the bull is difficult to handle. A bull should be watered at least once a day during the winter and twice a day during the summer.

A practically perfect ration for an average cow giving a full flow of milk is one composed of around 30 pounds of good corn ensilage, 10 to 12 pounds of good clover hay, four pounds of ground corn, four pounds of ground oats, two pounds of wheat bran, with a handful or so of oilmeal daily.

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Pays to Give it to Them.

A Minnesota judge ruled that cows have the right of way. Every motorist knows that.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

How to Keep Well.

Don't think the train has passed just because you see its tracks.—From the Country Motorist.

Pass Over Censure.

Be not diverted from your duty by any idle reflections the silly world may make upon you, for their censures are not in your power and consequently should not be any part of your concern.—Exchange.

Keeps Its Dead Leaves.

Maple, beech and hickory trees lose their foliage when frost touches them, but the winter oak retains its dead leaves all winter.

Head and Heart.

The head learns new things, but the heart evermore practices old experiences.—Beecher.

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