

AN EMBROIDERED CEILING.

It Once Graced the Chinese Imperial Palace at Peking.

One of the most beautiful and elaborate pieces of embroidery ever exhibited in New York was the ceiling of the council chamber of the imperial palace at Peking. This ceiling was formed of yellow silk of heavy quality that much resembled felle in the weave. The back was of a greenish blue, woven in a small diamond pattern. The total measurements of it all were twenty-one feet six inches long and nineteen feet six inches wide. The design with which it was embellished was an imperial dragon in the center and four others, one in each corner. Encircling these a groundwork was formed of cloud pattern, and dispersed were small bats and other symbols. The cloud effect was worked out in blue and purple and the bats in pink. The dragons were largely gold and silver, and a threefold line of gold surrounded each part of the design.

The story of this ceiling and how it came to New York includes a small part of Chinese history and custom. It was in the imperial council chamber at Peking that the envoys of the various nations met in 1902 to settle the Boxer difficulties. At the close of the session a representative of the emperor courteously informed them that the contents of the chamber were considered profaned by the presence of foreigners and that they were therefore at liberty to divide among themselves the chamber's furnishings. In this manner the ceiling fell to the share of the American envoy.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

HE KNEW A GOOD PLAY.

The Sagacious Canine Didn't Even Have to Read It.

One day I brought to my rooms in Twenty-third street a box of old manuscripts. Death and Trap, a building and fox terrier, stood by and looked on idly while I as idly looked over the plays. Suddenly Trap flew at a heap of manuscripts and seized a printed book. We tried to get it from him. He dashed about the room, under and over the bed.

The handmaid opened the door. Out went Trap, nearly upsetting my handmaid. My brother Sam and I rushed after the dog. Trap headed down Twenty-third street direct to the Lyceum theater, play in month. In and out among cars and cars, pedestrians and jehus, that wonderful dog went directly to the box office of the theater. Frank Bunce, the business manager, held him. "What has he got there?" said he. "A play," said I. "Does he want me to read it?" said Bunce. "If you please," I replied. "Take it upstairs to Mr. Frohman," said the business manager.

"Twas done, Frohman read it. He accepted and produced it. The play had been written twenty years before for my father by Madison Morton and Robert Reece. They called it "Trade." Frohman christened it "The Highest Bidder." The play was a great success and started both Dan Frohman and myself on the waters of prosperity.—Edward H. Sothern's "The Melancholy Tale of Me."

A Useful Storm.

Professor Cleveland Abbe, the American meteorologist, was generally credited with being the father of scientific weather forecasting. The possibility of predicting the weather was first considered at an international conference at Brussels in 1853, but the necessary impetus to the movement was given in 1854, during the Crimean war, by a violent storm in the Black sea, which caused havoc among the allied British and French vessels. One French warship was wrecked, and in consequence of this disaster the astronomer Le Verrier (the co-discoverer of Neptune, appropriately enough) was commissioned by the French government to investigate the meteorological conditions at the time of the storms.—Westminster Gazette.

Then He Drifted.

"Miss Eppson—Mildred," said the poor but otherwise honest and ambitious young man. "I have paddled my own canoe for years and feel sure I can support you. Will you be my wife?" "Nothing doing in the canoe line," replied the haughty maid. "If you had sailed your own yacht for years I might have considered your proposal."—Chicago News.

Anxious to Save Him.

"What are you doing there?" "Figuring on the upkeep of an automobile." "You can't afford to buy an automobile." "I know it. I'm just getting up some data with which to convince a friend of mine that he can't afford to buy one either."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Weather or No.

"Now tell us," sternly demanded the young legal luminary, whose brow overhung like the back of a snapping turtle, addressing the cowering witness, "what was the weather, if any, upon the afternoon in question?"—London Saturday Journal.

Doubts Heredity.

"Do you believe in heredity?" "No." "Why not?" "Look at the cheap skates that had great ancestors."—Detroit Free Press.

Too Long.

Edith—Haven't you and Jack been engaged long enough to get married? Ethel—Too long! He hasn't got a coat left.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

WONDER ISLAND OF HISTORY.

The Story of Sicily Is a Compendium of Medieval Romance.

Sicily's history is as vivid and picturesque, as ferocious and creative and destructive, as mythical and intensely practical as the stories of all the rest of the world put together. And in beauty of nature, of climate, or man, and of beast, the island is a paradise today, whether or not it was ever the workless, painless, passionless elysium where our first ancestors enjoyed all the good things of life without having to toil.

Nature itself, now in the guise of the misunderstood gods of old, now in convulsions or in quiet fertility that science has made plain to us, weaves its mysterious shuttle through and through the highly colored fabric. And men—such men!—tower above their fellows in the story like Titans—Pindar, Aeschylus, Theocritus, Thucydides, Archimedes, the two great Hierons, Cicero, Verres, Diodorus, Hannibal and Hannibal, Roger the Count and Roger the King, Belsarius, the great crusaders Richard of the Lion Heart and Louis the Saint of France, Charles of Anjou, Frederick II, the "wonder of the world," and Garibaldi. Even this partial list reads like a compendium of ancient and medieval romance and chivalry.—National Geographic Magazine.

CURIOS FRENCH DUEL.

When Man and Wife Tried to Settle a Dispute With Swords.

Charles Coyseau, Sieur d'Assouel, a French poet and musician of the seventeenth century, relates in one of his "Adventures" that his father and mother were one day engaged in a discussion upon questions of law when a dispute arose between them with regard to the precise signification and bearing of a provision in Justinian's code with respect to the rights of brothers.

Ultimately the quarrel waxed so furious that the disputants lost all control of themselves, defied each other to single combat and proceeded to settle their difference and determine the mind of the ancient legislator by a fight with swords. This singular duel took place in their son's presence. Coyseau pere was an advocate by profession and a member of one of the French parliaments. Madame was exceedingly diminutive and had to wear exceptionally high pattens to approach the ordinary stature of women, but she was terse and domineering in temper. The combat appears to have been a drawn battle, and the sense of Justinian remained as obscure and debatable as ever.

As Blind as Love.

As the German army approached Brussels in August, 1914, it was reported that the invaders might shell the city. In a high state of alarm the Chinese minister went to see our minister, Brand Whitlock, to see what Whitlock meant to do in the event of bombardment.

"I do not believe there will be any assault," said Whitlock. "My information is that the authorities will surrender Brussels to avoid any possibility of damage. But if there should be an engagement, and the Germans should use their heavy guns, I shall hoist the flag of my country over this building, and I shall call upon my fellow countrymen to come here for safety and protection. I advise you to do the same thing with regard to your people."

"But, Mr. Whitlock," murmured the Chinaman in his polite but labored English, "the cannon—he has no eyes!"—Saturday Evening Post.

Castle Garden.

Castle Garden was built by the United States in 1807 from the plans of Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Williams, C. E., and was called Fort Clinton. In 1822 it was ceded to New York city; in 1824 it became a place of amusement and about 1826 got its present name; in 1845 there were Ethiopian minstrels there; in 1847-9 theatrical companies played there; in 1850 Jenny Lind sang there; in 1855 it was closed as a place of amusement, and the commissioner of emigration took it as an emigrant depot; in 1870 it suffered from fire, and on July 9, 1876, it was burned to the ground. It was rebuilt at once. In 1882 the depot was moved to Ellis island, and Castle Garden reverted to the city, which in 1896 opened an aquarium there.

Our First Battleship.

The first American battleship was the old Texas of Spanish-American war fame. She was authorized by congress in 1886 and was completed six years later. The original battleship was little over 300 feet long and had a displacement of 6,315 tons. The present day Texas is 554 feet long and has a tonnage of 27,000 tons. The old Texas ended her days as a target for navy practice.—Exchange.

Late Repentance.

"You should never take anything that doesn't agree with you," admonished the physician. The patient glanced around ruefully at his wife. "If I had always followed that rule, Lizzie, where would you be?"—Chicago Herald.

Plenty of Practice.

"Have you any special qualification for this job you are asking for in our establishment as floorwalker?" "Oh, yes, sir! My twins have just been teething."—Baltimore American.

Panama is rising three feet in each century.

OLD KASSAN VILLAGE.

Curious Alaskan Landmark in the Tongass National Forest.

No other locality is quite like "Old Kassan National Monument," a unique tract of land held by the United States government. It consists of thirty-eight acres within the Tongass national forest, Alaska, and the tract embraces the well known abandoned Haida Indian village of Old Kassan, situated on Prince of Wales island, in southeastern Alaska, about thirty miles west of the city of Ketchikan.

The village was abandoned by the Indians about ten years ago. Among the relics which remain there are about fifty Indian totem poles, five or six of which are classed as exceedingly good specimens. In the deserted village there are also eight large square buildings which were originally constructed according to the peculiar plan of the Haida Indians and which, it is stated by those best qualified to know, represent the best specimens of Haida architecture that now exist. The largest of these buildings is approximately 40 by 60 feet in size and is made entirely of round and carved timbers.

There also remain a number of Indian graves, with the typical small grave houses erected by the Alaskan Indians. "Kassan" is said to be the Indian word which means "a pretty town," and all reports agree that the village was well named. The fact that the village was occupied by the Indians for many years explains the local name, "Old Kassan," by which it is widely known. Since the village was abandoned by the Indians the buildings have been rapidly falling into a state of dilapidation and decay.—Exchange.

AMERICA VESPUCCI.

She Asked Congress For Citizenship and "a Corner of Land."

A decided sensation was created at Washington during the Van Buren administration by the appearance there of a handsome and well dressed Italian woman who called herself America Vespucci and claimed descent from the navigator who gave his name to the continent. Ex-President Adams and Daniel Webster became her special friends, and she soon was a welcome guest in the best society. In a few weeks after her arrival she presented a petition to congress asking, first, to be admitted to the rights of citizenship and, secondly, to be given "a corner of land" out of the public domain of the country which bore the name of her ancestor. An adverse report, which soon was made, is one of the curiosities of congressional literature. It enclosed the petitioner as "a young, dignified and graceful lady, with a mind of the highest intellectual culture and a heart beating with all our own enthusiasm in the cause of American and human liberty." The reasons why the prayer of the petitioner could not be granted were given, but she was commended to the generosity of the American people.

"The name of America, our country's name, should be honored, respected and cherished in the interesting exile from whose ancestor we derive the great and glorious title."

Later it was discovered that the woman was an impostor.—Penley's Reminiscences.

Genius and Hair.

Charles Kassel has carefully reviewed the biographies of most of the eminent men of the world and has tabulated the results of his work, so far as the color of the hair is concerned. Dark brown to black is the prevailing hue on the heads of great men. A list of fifty names has been compiled in which the color of the hair is given by biographers, and 90 per cent are dark brown or black. The structure of the hair—whether straight or curly—is given on twenty-six of Mr. Kassel's list of geniuses, and of these all but four possessed curly or wavy hair. It is extremely notable that, of the remaining four, Napoleon and President Jackson were the two remarkable for "wiry hair," and that James Russell Lowell and Grieg were those having lank, straight hair.

Why He Got "Licked."

"I understand you were punished in school yesterday, Thomas," said Mr. Bacon to his twelve-year-old boy. "Yes, sir," promptly replied the truthful Thomas. "It was for telling the truth, sir." "Your teacher said it was for some reflection on her age." "That's the way she took it, father. You see, she drew a picture of a basket of eggs on the blackboard, and while she was out of the room I just wrote under them, 'The hen that made these eggs isn't any chicken.'"—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Only Way to Know Dogs.

The only true and thorough straight way to know the dog is to own one. A common residence under the same roof-tree, be it animals or humans, is the sure test of personality. To own the dog is to comprehend him in his faults and virtues, to protect his weaknesses, be anxious at his vagrancies, to catch the contagion of his love and to agonize if it so be that he die.—Our Dumb Animals.

Not Becoming.

"You used to say that girl was an angel." "Yes. And I'm sorry I said it. She got interested in flying, and, after seeing her in her aviation costume, I must say she doesn't look the part."—Washington Star.

Show me a man without a spot, and I'll show you a maid without a fault.—Proverb.

A TREE AND A DISEASE.

Malaria and the Effect Produced by Planting a Blue Gum.

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century it was a common practice to plant blue gum or eucalyptus trees in districts infected by malarial fever. It was held that the essential oil produced by the leaves combated the harmful vapors rising from the swamps laden with the poison of the disease. The discovery that the malarial germ is introduced into the blood by a mosquito has settled once and for all the origin of the disease.

The theory that the eucalyptus tree neutralized the poison vapors is untenable, yet the fact remains that where blue gums were freely planted there was always a notable decline in the amount of malaria. What is the explanation of this circumstance? It has been demonstrated that, of nearly all trees, the eucalyptus absorbs the greatest amount of water. Two seedlings—a blue gum and a plum—were placed with their roots in water, and the height of the water was carefully marked. The plants were kept in a warm atmosphere and examined at the end of twenty-four hours. The little eucalyptus had disposed of four times the water that the plum had been able to take up.

Seeing that blue gums increase in height with great rapidity, often growing many inches a day in a hot position, the amount of moisture taken up increases on a greatly progressive scale. And this is just what brings about the downfall of the malarial mosquito. To complete its life cycle it is necessary that this insect should pass its larval stage in pools of water. With the coming of the eucalyptus these pools and indeed all marshy places disappear, the breeding spots of the mosquitoes are gone, and in time the insects vanish altogether.

THE MIDDLE WEST.

Can Any One Really Tell Just Where It Is Located?

The east retains a somewhat condescending attitude toward the middle west, and in its friendliest moments speaks of the plainsmen as "first rate raw material," as if the middle west existed and had somehow a local habitation and a name.

The middle west itself is by no means so sure about that. Although the prairies begin at Batavia, N. Y., Buffalonians resent being termed middle westerners. Omaha I should describe as unquestionably middle western, yet there are middle westerners who repudiate Nebraska and only tepidly accept Kansas, while St. Louis and Kansas City belong to the middle west according to some authorities, to the south according to others as vociferous.

By general consent Minnesota belongs to the northwest. However, if you go halfway from Portland, Me., to Portland, Ore., all of Minnesota lies behind you. In Chicago they say: "Why, man, alive, there's nothing western about us! This is the interior." A dear soul in Montana remarked to me: "How jolly to hear that you came from the east! I'm an easterner myself. I lived in Iowa."

Where, then, is the middle west? In the words of the immortal Artemus, I answer, "Nowhere—nor anywhere else."—Rollin Lynde Hartt in Century Magazine.

The Height of Trees.

When one is out for a walk it is a very common thing to wish to know the height of a particular tree which happens to catch the eye. When the sun is shining it is possible accurately to measure the height of the tree from the shadow it casts on the ground. In order to do so a stick must be set upright in the ground so that its shadow falls beside the shadow of the tree. Then, as the length of the stick's shadow to the stick's height, so is the length of the tree's shadow to the tree's height. For example, suppose a two and a half foot stick shows a shadow three feet long and the tree's shadow is eighteen feet long. Therefore the tree is six times as high as the stick, which shows that the height of the tree will be fifteen feet.

He Was Short.

Early one evening a frail little girl entered a candy store and asked for a cake of chocolate. After she had the candy she put four pennies on the counter and started out.

The storekeeper, though averse to frightening the little thing, called after her in a gentle voice: "You're a penny short."

"No; you're a penny short," she called back as she disappeared.

Well Named.

"A wonderful man is my uncle," said little Blinks, "so very original and witty."

He says he called his dog "Sausage" because it was half bread, his goat "Nearly" because it was "ali butt" and his prize cockerel "Robinson" because it "Crucio."—Exchange.

A Sure Winner.

"I've been stuck at different times on cotton, tobacco, oranges and corn."

"Well?" "Now I think I'll invest in a coal mine. That crop is never a failure, and there's always a demand for the output."—Kansas City Journal.

Bitter.

"Who is that foolish man that is in love with you?" "How do you know he is foolish?" "He is in love with you."—Houston Post.

Vessels large may venture more, but little boats should keep near shore.—Franklin.

Blossom Time in the Golden State

A friend just back from Southern California says: "The weather was fine, in fact too warm for heavy clothes. Many were bathing at the beaches. Oranges were ripe in the valleys, while the mountains nearby were covered with snow."

With warm sunny weather it will not be long before the blossoms on the trees will be everywhere announcing that spring time is here.

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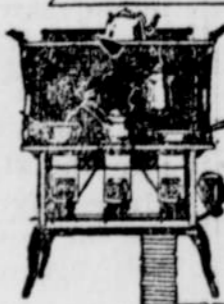
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