

WOMEN'S CLUBS IN INDIA.

They are not Devoted to High Ideals and Social Lines are Marked.

In India club women do not aim at realizing lofty ideals. There comfort and amusements are the avowed objects of all women's organizations. Debates are never held, papers are never written and therefore never have to be listened to, and the gravest problems discussed are the probabilities of Capt. A.'s marrying Miss B. on his small income, the wonderful power that Mrs. X. has over the deputy Commissioner, whose wife lives 'at home,' that is, in England, and the scandalous report that Gen. Z.'s great-great-grandmother was 'dark.' A person who has never been in India cannot comprehend the gravity of this last matter. Such an accusation is worse than saying that a man had no great-great-grandmother at all.

The clubhouse is a large, roomy bungalow, the most attractive thing about it being the broad gallery, which extends all the way around and is inclosed with lattice work. The bungalow includes four or five rooms, by far the most important being a bar where refreshments, principally liquid, are served. The largest room is—whisper it not in womanhood—devoted to the main to dancing. It has a parquet floor, and at least once a week a dance is given by the club members. This room is also let to people wishing to give balls, and here bachelors and grass widowers are permitted to give their women friends little dinners or theatre supper parties.

Another room, much smaller, is used as a library. It is furnished with tables covered with the latest magazines and newspapers and a couple of book shelves filled with novels of the day and such works of light-weight science and philosophy as have made a stir in the reading world. To say that a woman has read the last is equivalent to saying that she has something in her. A drawing room and dressing room complete the house for such a thing as a residential club for women is still unheard of in India. A brown bespectacled native sits on duty at a table on the veranda. His function is to keep the accounts and to send round the subscription book every month when collections are made.

The club women all go in for athletics. Attached to every clubhouse is a large hall with an earthen floor. This is covered with matting, and here that most exciting game, badminton, is played in the cool of morning and afternoon. Sometimes tournaments are held. On dance nights this court is utilized as a promenade, when it is lighted with Chinese lanterns and decorated with potted plants. Tennis courts are also frequently attached to the building, and a regiment of small boys in uniform is on hand to get the balls.

The clubhouse is invariably located where the plays on certain evenings. On such occasions every one sits at small tables on the lawn eating ice, drinking cooling beverages, and discussing the coming races or the prospects for the next season at Simla. Children are admitted on these days, though ordinarily a placard tells them plainly that they are not wanted.

This is the smart women's club. Another variety of club flourishes in India at big stations, and is devoted to women who are not quite at the top notch of Anglo-Indian swiftness. Its membership consists of those who attend the big balls and general gatherings at the Government house, but a lot out in the cold when it comes to the Sunday dinners and small dances. The wives of the cavalry officers and those who value their reputation as belonging to the upper crust shun these Murghic Khana, as they are called, and their members as they would the plague itself. One who enters such a club will find that the company consists of a crowd of women engaged in discussing domestic affairs, such as which is the best soap for washing dish cloths or how to keep babies' flannels white. When a woman becomes domestic in India she becomes very domestic. There is no betwixt and between. Her horizon is a narrow one. Art, literature, and the affairs of the nation have no place in her mind. If one does stray in it always turns out that it is after one or two things—a new alter-dinner story or volunteers to do some work, such as decorating the church, for example.

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Subscriptions to women's clubs in India vary from seven rupees up, according to the station and reputation of the club. There is an admission fee, and members are elected by ballot. It is said that the temptation to drop in a black ball, as a form of revenge for some former slight, real or fancied, often overcomes a member, but woe to her if she is discovered, for her sister members make it hot for her.

HE SAILED WITH LAFITTE.

"Uncle Jolly" Witnessed Barbarous Murders and Atrocities.

An old negro, whom the white people believed to have been much more than 100 years old died on the Beule cotton plantation, near All-Seeing Eye, in Texas, a short time ago. The negroes called him 'Old Pirate,' from the fact that he never tired of talking of his adventures at sea. To the white people he had always been known as 'Uncle Jolly,' a name which he maintained was given to him by Lafitte's pirates when he was a boy, from the fact that he was sprightly and always in good humor.

According to his story he was born a slave on one of the islands of the West Indies. When he was ten or twelve years of age his master started on a voyage to New Orleans, taking his family and the negro boy Jolly along. One day, shortly after they had left the island, a big ship sailed close to them and began to fire big guns. The ships drew closer together and the people in both vessels began to fire guns and pistols. After a few moments the pirate ship ran alongside and hundreds of ferocious-looking men with swords and pistols in their hands sprang on board, uttering savage yells and curses. Jolly saw his master fall fighting on the decks, and he ran below to tell his mistress. There were several women and children in the cabin.

It is hard for anyone to believe that anything in the shape of a human being could have been guilty of such cruelties as these monsters perpetrated upon their defenseless victims. The negro said that he could not bear to witness the agonies of the women and children, and he returned to the companionway, where he met several of the pirates. One struck at him with a cutlass, but another interposed, remarking 'Don't kill him; he is worth a pocketful of gold.' They threw him up on the deck and went on into the cabin of the ship.

The captain and a half dozen of the crew who had escaped the massacre were put in chains. The women and children were driven below. The pirates at once began to loot the doomed vessel, and several hours were spent in transporting the booty to the decks of the pirate ship. Late in the evening the ship was set on fire and the pirates sailed away.

Little attention was paid to the negro boy, and he was permitted to wander about as he pleased. The next morning the pirate captain, followed by several officers, stumbled on deck, and then the negro boy witnessed a scene that haunted him to his grave.

The prisoners were all driven on the forward deck of the ship, preparatory to walking the plank. The captain was the first one ordered to walk out. He told his arms across his bosom, and moved to his death with a firm step and with his head erect. The women and children now realized that they were to be drowned in the sea, and they began to pray and moan piteously. One poor woman, pressing a child to her bosom, walked up to one of the pirate officers, and implored him to spare her life, offering him her jewels and promising him a large sum of money. The monster tore a gold chain from her neck and began to curse her. The child was crying, and the merciless demon wrenched it from her arms and hurled it into the sea. The poor mother at once ran to the side of the ship and sprang overboard. Jolly's curiosity prompted him to follow her to the ship's side, where he saw her rise upon a wave and grasp her infant in her arms. He felt some satisfaction in knowing that the poor mother sank to rise no more with her little baby clasped to her breast.

The sailors walked the plank one after another, all but one who was permitted to join the pirate crew. The poor women had to be forced and dragged on the plank. Many of the children were thrown into the sea, where they were strangled up and crushed in the jaws of a swarm of sharks that had gathered around the ship.

One beautiful young lady marched with her head erect and a scornful look on her face toward the plank, and when near it the captain of the pirates threw his arms around her waist and dragged her back. She angrily tried to break away from him and throw herself into the sea. Two ugly brutes seized and forced her into the ship's cabin. Jolly did not see this pretty girl alive any more, but a few days afterward he saw the pirates throw the dead body of a woman into the sea.

The pirate ship, on board of which Jolly had been installed as a cabin boy, finally anchored at the Island of Barataria, just at the time when the great pirate chief, Lafitte, was preparing to march to the assistance of General Jackson at New Orleans. Jolly was assigned as a servant to one of the pirate captains, whom he accompanied to the Crescent City, and he was always very sure that he witnessed the great battle of New Orleans.

MEN AND PROCESSIONS.

The Idea of Forming in Parade in Vogue Among the Ancients!

Man, as a species, loves a procession, says Harper's Bazar. It is the one love, in fact, that sets him apart from the rest of the vertebrates. In his primitive condition it belonged to him. Civilization has only fostered it. Both sacred and profane history give evidence of this. And records of contemporary life the world over prove the truth of it every day.

It is four years now since this love has been gratified among us, since the last of our great processions blocked and blackened the streets of New York, and masses of people filled the doorways and windows of houses for miles, or stood all day on the pavement to watch the troops file by. Neither fatigue nor hunger appalled them at the time; nor did the memory of anything suffered dampen the ardor of their response when a new procession was announced, for the day of the dedication of General Grant's tomb.

From every part of the country, in fact, men and women came and for weeks, as we all know, preparations were everywhere being made.

But when the day arrived one saw again, what one always sees on occasions like it, that a procession or parade, after all, or any great function, is very much like every thing else in life—the interest it inspires depending upon that which each individual has in himself to bring to its enjoyment.

The patriot is stirred by such a one as we witnessed the other day. He never loses sight of the great idea being celebrated, nor ceases to thrill with its meaning. But the small boy sees only the glitter and glow of that which passes before him. The young woman taking a holiday is blind to every thing but the happy chance which is hers of seeing it all by the side of her lover. The speculator with seats for sale recognizes only a field for profit, while the woman of hospitable instinct finds an unexpected opportunity for the exercise of her talents in adding to the pleasures of others.

Indeed, in all large towns, as well as in New York, there are always groups of friends invited to use the windows of householders along the line of march, and the charm of these parties is not easily forgotten. One must be young for them, perhaps. One certainly, in remembering them, can hardly escape wishing one were young enough again.


For there are the tete-a-tete and elbow-touching over the window sill as the procession goes by below—waving flags, glittering accoutrements, the rhythmic tramp of the soldier's the confused clatter of horses' hoofs, the shrill whistle of the file and the trumpet-call of martial music. How the blood bounds! Then there is the dainty luncheon in the darkened dining-room, the perfume of flowers everywhere, when the glare outside has become wearisome. Then there is the other tete-a-tete in the library, the window sill resigned—for purely selfish reasons of course! And then there is the sudden shout as a favorite troop rides by, and every one rustles pell-mell to the windows again, with waving handkerchiefs, stirred for the moment by a real enthusiasm for outside things.

No wonder, then, that all men love processions. No wonder either that they sometimes forget what a procession is for—the welcome of a potentate, the triumph of a conqueror, the celebration of a victory or the doing honor to a man whom we hold as great as General Grant.

Public services are not really forgotten nor noble examples of patriotism ignored, because for the time being everything else is forgotten in one's individual pleasure born of the day. And perhaps the reason for man's love of a procession as he does, is that he loves a holiday and to be the looker-on.

Some Big Coins.

It is said the largest coin now in circulation is the gold ingot or 'locl' of Anam, a French colony in Eastern Asia. It is a flat, round gold piece, and on it is written in India ink its value, which is about \$220. The next sized coin to this valuable but extremely awkward one, is the 'obang,' of Japan, which is worth about \$55 and next comes the 'benda,' of Ashantee, which represents a value of about \$16. The California \$50 gold piece is worth about the same as the 'benda.' The heaviest silver coin in the world also belongs to Anam, where the silver ingot is worth about \$15 then comes the Chinese 'tael' and then the Austrian double thaler.—Pittsburg Dispatch.



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SIR FRANCIS DRAKE'S FORTUNE.

Cold Facts for People Thinking of Trying to Capture a Phantom Estate.

Louis Stoughton Drake, of Auburndale, Mass., compiler of 'The Drake family in England and America, from 1360 to 1895,' has this to say about the 'Drake Relative Association,' formed in Western Pennsylvania for the purpose of recovering the 'vast Sir Francis Drake Fortune.'

'As this wild scheme has broken out once or twice in each generation for the last hundred years, and people of the name, of all races, all over the country, have been intentionally and unintentionally duped or swindled out of hundreds of dollars by men 'who have looked the whole matter up.' I think that it is time to call a halt. The days when something can be gotten for nothing have long since passed and no person by the name of Drake has the slightest reason for hoping even that there is any money to come from Sir Francis Drake's fortune or any other source in England.

'In the first place the amount of property left by Admiral Drake's heirs has been grossly exaggerated. I have copies of all of the wills by which it passed from one generation to another, which shows that it finally dwindled down to the ancient family house at Buckland Abbey, in the parish of Buckland, Monachorum, and a mansion house at Nutwell Court in the Parish of Woodbury, Devon, England, and various personal property of little value, at the time that it passed out of the Drake family.

'The final result of the work of all of the different Drake Associations has been to discover, after endless research and expenditure of hundreds of dollars, that the 'Squatter's Claim' of twenty years entitled the family into whose hands the property passed to complete possession, and debarred everyone else. I have in my hands a letter written from England by a lawyer sent over there by the 'New York Drake Association' of 1870, in which he says, as a result of his researches and conferences with English lawyers, that if the members of that society could prove their descent from the brothers of Sir Francis Drake a hundred times, which, by the way, no one can do, it would do them no good whatever.

'When one takes into consideration that there are in this country Drakes of English descent, Irish descent, Scotch descent, Dutch and Spanish descent, and all of the Drake Fortune Societies have taken them all in as members, and promised them their share of the property on a payment of a suitable initiation fee, it can be readily seen on the face of it how much the whole thing amounts to.'

THREE CURIOUS PLANTS.

The Cannibal Tree, Grapple Plant and Vegetable Python.

Three of the most dangerous of vegetative plants in the world are the 'cannibal tree' of Australia, the 'death' or 'grapple plant' of South Africa, and the 'vegetable python' of New Zealand.

The 'cannibal tree' grows in the shape of a huge pineapple and attains a height of eleven feet. It has a series of broad board-like leaves, growing to a fringe at the apex which forcibly brings to mind a gigantic Central American agave, and these board-like leaves, from ten to twelve feet in the smaller specimens and from fifteen to twenty feet in the larger, hang to the ground and are easily strong enough to bear the weight of a man of 140 pounds or more. In the ancient times this tree was worshipped by the native savages under the name of the 'devil tree,' a part of the interesting ceremony being the sacrifice of one of their number to its all-too-ready embrace. The victim to be sacrificed was driven up the leaves of the tree to the apex and the instant the so-called 'pistils' of the monster were touched the leaves would fly together like a trap, crushing the life out of the intruder. In this way the tree would hold its victim until every particle of flesh would disappear from his bones.

The 'grapple plant' is a prostrate herb, Urtica dioica, Osmunda, sp. etc., perforated. Dried, 17 Waterloo.

growing in South Africa. Its flowers are purple and shaped like the English foxglove. Its fruit has formidable hooks, which by clinging to any passer-by, is conveyed to situations where its seed may find suitable conditions for growth. Sir John Lubbock says it has been known to kill

The 'vegetable python,' which is known to the naturalist as the clusia or fig, is the strangler of trees. The seeds of the clusia being provided with a pulp and a very pleasant to the tropical birds which feed thereon, are carried from tree to tree and deposited on the branches. Here germination begins. The leafy stem slowly rises up while the roots flow, as it were, down the trunk until the soil is reached. Here and there they branch, changing their course according to the direction of any obstruction met with. Meanwhile from these rootlets heavy branches have been developed, which, pushing themselves through the canopy above, get into the light, and enormously accelerate their growth. Now a metamorphosis takes place. For the hitherto soft aerial plants begin to harden and spread wider and wider, throwing out side branches which flow into and amalgamate with each other until the whole tree is bound in a series of irregular living hoops. From this time on it is a struggle of life and death between the forest giant and the entwining clusia. Like an athlete the tree tries to expend and burst its fetters, causing the bark to bulge between every interlacing; but success and freedom are not for the captive tree, for the monster clusia has made its bands very numerous and wide. Not allowed expansion, the tree soon withers and dies, and the stranger is soon expanded in a great bush, almost as large as the mass of branches and foliage it has effaced. It is truly a tragedy in the world of vegetation. Los Angeles Herald.

RUSSIAN HUNTING DOGS.

The Duties of These Animals is of a Varied Nature.

Harding Cox writes about laikas, or Northern dogs, to the London Field. He says that the duties of the true laika, are of an extremely varied nature. Among the Chinese about 1,000,000 are eaten every year, while in Russia the beast is trained for all sorts of hunting—quarrels, bear, deer, snipe, capercaillie, ermine, sable, and all the other beasts are taken every year with them, even the wolves. It is estimated that nearly 1,000,000 rubles' worth of game is taken every year with the aid of the laikas in Russia. Prince Schirinsky, a Russian noble, is trying to get a cross between the laika and some setter or retriever, believing that he would thereby obtain a dog which would make as nearly a perfect hunting dog as is possible. In the polar swamps the laikas as used in drawing sledges as well as in hunting by the natives, while their warm pelts are made to serve as coats and trousers after death. The laika has an upright, pointed ear, which the dog pricks when excited. The muzzle is long and sharp, but powerful. The ribs are big and long. The chest is deep and broad. The legs are for running, while the coat is thick, having 'cotton' under the hair, which makes it warm. The chief colors are from black, and black and tan to grayish, but the dogs are never spotted in pure blood. A few of these dogs can stop a bear or anything else easily. The dogs are just short of two feet high.

Only a Question of Fat.

'But we cannot live on papa,' protested the savage's bride to be. 'He is dreadfully poor.'

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