

## Oddities of Life in China.

China is a strange country full of people with many strange ideas. The Chinese chief dependence seems to be a wall. So nothing more than 2,000 years ago the Chinese built the Great Wall on their northern border for the purpose of shutting out their enemies. Since then they have run to walls. Every town or city is surrounded by a wall. The houses of the officials within the towns or cities are walled. The first thing a Chinaman does when he thinks of building a house is to build a wall around the site. The temples are all within walls. Everything that is anything has a wall around it. To get inside these walls one has to pass through a narrow gateway. Inside each gateway is a bit of detached wall. To get into the enclosure it is necessary to turn an acute angle to the right or to the left. This inside bit of detached wall is a little higher than the opening in the main wall and a little wider. It looks nothing more than a substantial screen to prevent outsiders from looking inside the compound.

'What's that thing for?' demanded a stranger of a Chinaman.

'That,' said the Chinaman, 'is to keep the bad spirits out.'

'What a fool idea,' said the stranger. 'How will that keep them out? Can't they get in here or here?' pointing to the openings on either side.

'Oh, no,' said the Chinaman, 'bad spirits can go only in a straight line. When they try to come in they bump against the wall.'

'How do you know that bad spirits can travel only in a straight line?'

'Do you know they don't?' asked the Chinaman, innocently, and that ended the conversation.

The Chinese stove that killed Col. Count Yorck von Wartenburg was a miserable little affair such as all Chinese use to heat their rooms if they are wealthy enough to afford heat at all. These stoves are made of fire-clay.

The body is pear shaped and is about a foot and a half high. Top and bottom there are flat squares a foot across. At the bottom of the pear-shaped body is a square

warned against sleeping with the stove in his room the very night that he was asphyxiated. Deaths from asphyxiation due to these stoves are very common in China, particularly at the beginning of the cold weather, when fires are first used. The people know this, but do not seem to heed the repeated warnings they receive in the form of deaths among friends and neighbors. There have been many narrow escapes from asphyxiation among officers and men of the allied forces now in China who did not understand the deadly character of the Chinese stoves. The death of Count Von Yorck has been a warning to them and the stoves are now generally tabooed.

In many of the temples in China there are bells—great numbers of them. 'What is that for?' demanded the stranger in the Bell Temple, pointing to the biggest bell there. 'That,' said the Chinaman, 'is to wake up the good spirits. When the Chinaman wants the spirits to help him and he comes here maybe the spirits are asleep. If the spirits are sleeping they cannot hear. If they do not hear, how can they know what is wanted? If you hit the bell the spirits wake up and listen.' 'Bang, bang,' went the stranger on the bell, striking it with his heavy walking stick. 'See,' said he, but the Chinaman had fled.

It was a dry season in China. The Viceroy Earl Li Hung Chang was calling on the American Minister, Mr. Conger, and he spoke of the weather.

'Yes,' said Mr. Conger, 'it seems to be dry everywhere. It is dry in my country, too. I read in one of our papers the other day that in many places in the West the people were praying for rain.'

'What,' said the earl, 'do you people pray to their God for rain?'

'Oh yes,' said the Minister, 'they often pray for rain.'

'And does their God send it when they pray for it,' asked the earl.

'Yes, sometimes their prayers are answered and sometimes they are not.'

'All the same like Chinese Joss, hey?' said the earl with a grin and a chuckle.

When you call on a Chinaman who is

certainly looks as if that promise was being fulfilled for the heathen, doesn't it? They still worship their ancestors. I have been here forty-seven years and not a year has passed that they haven't talked of partitioning China. And I believe as they still do worship their ancestors, we ought to be a little slow in proposing any partition at this time.'

During the siege at Peking, where the native Christians who were not fortunate enough to get into the compound opposite

that the old man must have been possessed of a devil and they buried his body lest the evil spirit should enter them.

In China all fence gates that swing, swing in. In America most gates swing out. In China all doors that swing open outward. In America doors open inward. The reason given for swinging gates and doors there in China is that they are more convenient when they are swung that way, and it is the custom. In America the gates

tramp who was prowling around in search of shelter for the night and found a convenient barn. It was dark, and he felt his way up the ladder into the loft.

While walking around there he stepped into an open shaft and down he went to the floor below. That was not the worst of it. There was a vat of sorghum-molasses directly beneath the shaft, and the tramp went in up to his neck.

He crawled out and tried to escape off the mess with hay and straw, but when he emerged next morning he was such a sight that the dogs were afraid of him. In the end he was forced to surrender himself to the police, so that he might get a change of clothing.

Left and Right.

Bank clerks are so often called upon for information that they fall into the habit of giving it in a hurried, mechanical way. A Philadelphia exchange cites an instance which was followed by unexpected and amusing results.

The usual formula when a stranger is called upon to sign his name is 'Sign here, pen and ink, left hand.'

One morning a stranger entered a New York savings-bank and asked for a certificate of deposit for a considerable sum of money, and was directed as above. It took him a long time to sign his name.

A month later the same man appeared and presented the certificate. He signed his name, but when the clerk looked at it he saw that it was vastly different from the first signature.

'This is not the signature of the man to whom I issued this certificate,' he said severely.

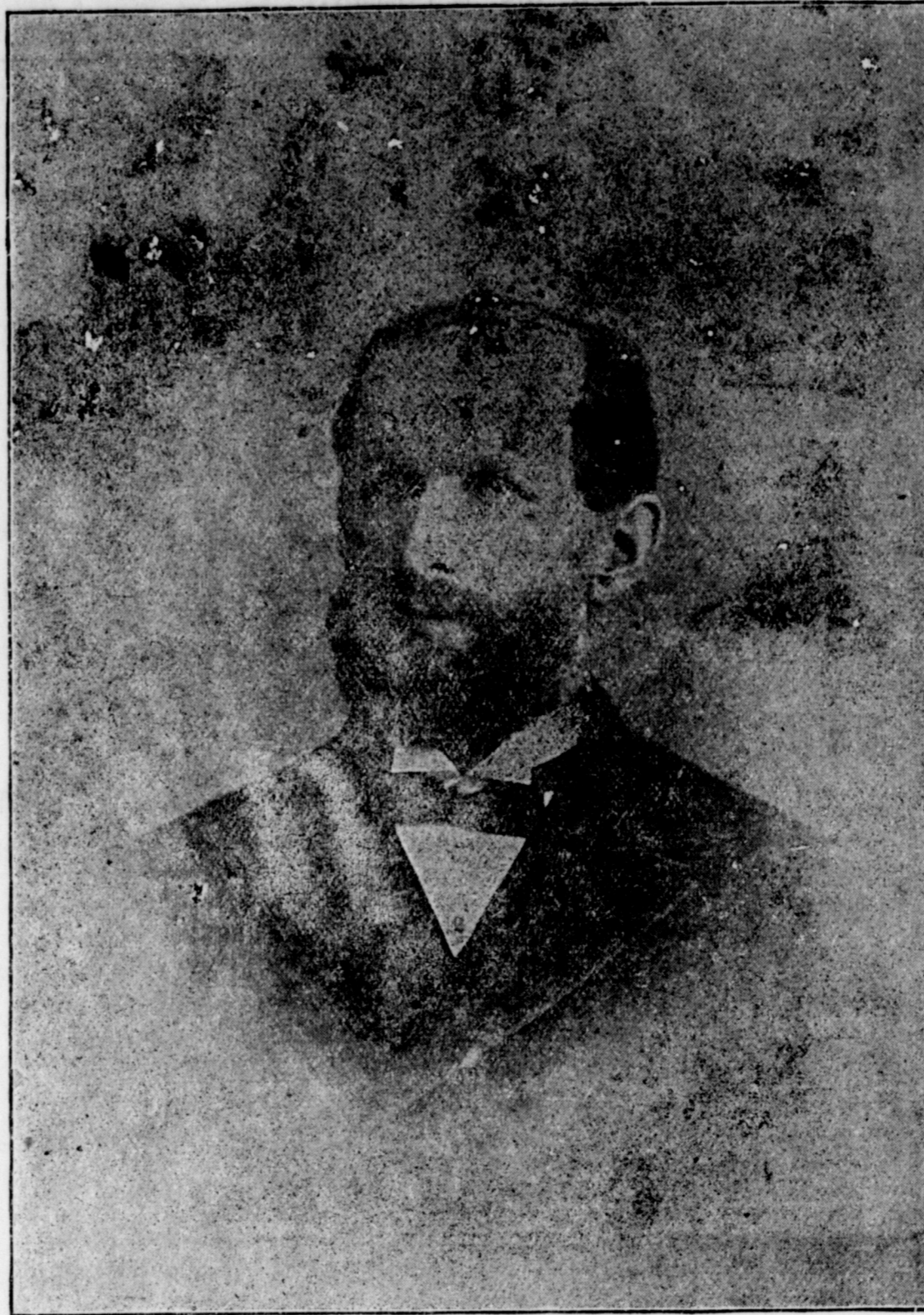
'Well,' said the stranger, 'when I was here a month ago you told me to write my name with my left hand and I can't write very well that way.'

A light dawned upon the clerk, and he asked the man to write his name again with his left hand. This he did, producing a facsimile of his first signature, and the money was paid.

Much Cause for Rejection.

In the old days of travel in America, before the palace-car and vestibuled trains came along to inspire the traveller with the dignity and majesty of social reserve, there was a closeness of association which made fellow passengers companionable. In "Stage-Coach and Tavern Days" Alice Morse Earle relates an incident tending to show this familiarity of discourse and freedom of speech.

One would feel a decided intimacy with a fellow sufferer who had risen several mornings in succession with you at day-



GEO. ROBERTSON, M. P. P. for St. John City.  
Now in England.

the British legation along with the missionaries were being killed as fast as they were hunted out by the Boxers, the news came to the Boxer headquarters one day that there was a family of Christians of the name of Su living in the Chinese city who had so far escaped disturbance. The head of this Su family, old man Su, was 80 years of age. He and all of his family had for days been expecting the Boxers to come and kill them, but they did not try to escape. On the day that the Boxers started after them some of their neighbors sent word to them that the fatalities were coming.

'We are ready,' declared the old man and his wife and children nodded assent. The neighbors say old Su took the matter joyfully. He put on his best clothing and when he heard that the mob was near he said it was his wedding day, and he would be out to meet death, his bride. He strode out of the house and up the street in the direction of the approaching mob and when he was in sight of the leaders he beat his breast and cried out: 'Here am I, here am I; kill me if you will.' The mob surrounded him, and beat his brains out and kicked and stamped on him. Then they finished his family in the same way.

After the work was done the leaders

and doors are swung in opposite directions for the same reason.

Sticky.

An inventive turn of mind sometimes leads its possessor into peculiar difficulties. A Boston daily reports the case of a man who



FIRING THE SALUTE.

devised a one-piece rubber-lined cotton undergarment, which was intended to be soft and warm and at the same time water proof. He expected to make a fortune by the sale of the same to miners, seafaring men and others whose occupations are pur-

break and ridden all day, cheek by jowl. Even fellow travellers on short trips entered into conversation, and the characteristic inquisitiveness was shown.

Ralph Waldo Emerson took great delight in this experience of his in stage coach travel. A sharp featured, keen eyed, elderly Yankee woman rode in a Vermont coach opposite a woman deeply veiled and garbed in morning attire, and the older woman thus entered into conversation:

'Have you lost friends?'  
'Yes,' was the answer, 'I have.'  
'Was they near friends?'  
'Yes, they was.'  
'How near was they?'  
'A husband and a brother.'  
'Where did they die?'  
'Down in Mobile.'  
'What did they die of?'  
'Yellow fever.'  
'How long was they sick?'  
'Not very long.'  
'Was they seafaring men?'  
'Yes, they was.'  
'Did you save their chests?'  
'Yes, I did.'  
'Was they hopefully pious?'  
'I hope so.'

'Well, if you have got their chests' (with emphasis) 'and they was hopefully pious, you've got much to be thankful for.'

Hon. Mr. Costigan has given motion on the Canadian parliament condemning the oath taken by the king on his coronation and asking the British parliament to have it changed.



NEWCASTLE FIELD BATTERY

Selected to Fire the Salute at the Opening of the Legislature.

hole for draft. Above it is a small, round hole through which the fire can be lighted. In the top square there is a hole in the centre out of which in the ordinary stove would rise a chimney, but these stoves have no chimney. The fuel burned in them is a mixture of clay and coal dust. The coal of northern China is a very hard anthracite and does not ignite easily. The Chinese pound it to dust and mix it in about equal parts with clay. The whole is wet down with water and then is made into little balls about the size of English walnuts. The coal in these balls takes fire readily and it requires only a few minutes to have a good fire going. But there is no means of carrying off the gas released by the coal in the process of combustion, so it is the custom to start the fire out of doors, letting the worst of the gas escape out there. Then the stove is carried into the house and into the room which is to be heated. Of course, all the gas in the coal has not been released, but sufficient of it to make the fire less dangerous.

If you are in the room when the fire is brought in you will not notice the odor that is given off. But if you come into a room where one of these fires is burning from the fresh outdoor air the stench is very perceptible. If the stove has not been permitted to burn in the open air a sufficiently long time there remains enough gas to make it a deadly contrivance, as it turned out to be in the case of Col. Count Von Yorck. The count was warned about the use of these stoves, but he laughed at the warnings. The Germans say that he was

able to have a servant, the first thing that servant does is to bring in two cups of tea. He puts one in front of the master and one in front of the visitor. Then the master indicates that you shall drink from the cup before you. If you want to incur his everlasting enmity go ahead and drink. He merely asks you to drink it for politeness sake. He does not want you to do it, and expects you to refuse for politeness sake. Letting the tea stand in front of you, you proceed with your interview, and you are at liberty to continue it, and you may feel that you are welcome until your host picks up his cup and takes a sip. That is the polite way he has of telling you that the interview is ended. The polite thing for you to do then is to take one sip of your tea, and depart. The right to drink the first sip of tea, however, goes with rank. If the visitor outranks the host no matter how much the host may wish to be rid of him—he must sit until the visitor chooses to take a sip of his tea.

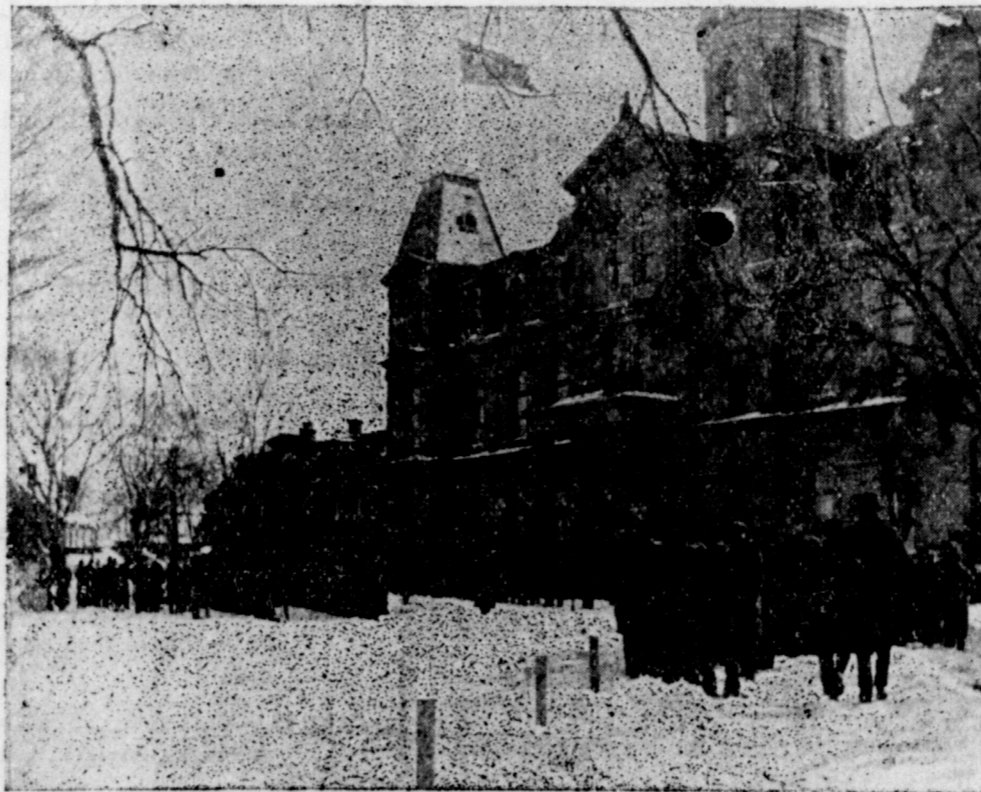
'Now let us see' said Sir Robert Hart, head of the Chinese Imperial Customs or the 'I. C.' as is known here; 'let us see about this partition of China question. The Chinese worship their ancestors. No matter how he may stand otherwise on religious subjects he worships his ancestors. If I remember my bible rightly, it says 'Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' And if I read my history right the Chinese empire has lasted longer of any on earth. It

marvelled at the courage of old Su coming out and facing death as he had done, and they picked up his body and carried it to their temple in the Chinese city outside the Tartar wall. They told the story of his wonderful courage to the priests and then they cut his heart out and examined it to see where the courage had come from. When they found nothing they decided

stayed in damp or wet places.

Unfortunately, however, when he donned the new garment and it became warm, the rubber melted and stuck to his body, and the fabric was only removed with the aid of a pair of scissors and a scraping knife.

Something similar, although from a different cause, happened to an Indiana



PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.