Elephants' Union at Work Viewed by World Fliers

Truth of Kipling's Poem Is Proved at Rangoon; Lowell Smith Falls Ill From Dysentery.

Told By LOWELL THOMAS.

Before landing at Rangoon all that the world fliers knew about Burma was that it was something associated with Kipling's famous poem, "On the Road to Mandalay." "Smiling Jack" Harding had sung it once in a concert at Nashville and as he climbed out of the cockpit after the long day's flight from Siam across the Malay peninsula to Burma some of the words came back to him:

"Elephants a pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squidgy creek.
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy,
You wuz 'arf afraid to speak."

Looking around to see whether Kipling was right, sure enough there on the shore, only a short distance away, were the elephants of the Bombay-Burma company carrying huge logs of teak on their tusks and stacking it in piles. One old elephant, after putting down his load and starting off, glanced back. Noticing that the end of his log was not quite even with the rest in the pile, he gave it a final kick with one of his hind feet.

Elephants Have Trade Union

"Then," added Jack, "while we were servicing up the planes, the 6 o'clock whistle blew over there in the teak yard, and every elephant dropped his load and trotted off. The English aviators in Rangoon explained to us when we got ashore that the elephants engaged in the teak piling business have their own trade union and refuse to work over time!"

Instead of accepting the invitations of the millionair Scottish rice and teak barons, who wanted to put them up in their bungalows, the boys decided to stay at the old Royal Air force clubhouse a few miles out of the city, where they could be nearer the planes. In fact, the British men insisted upon it. Monkey Point was the name of the place where we stayed.

"Whenever we recall our experience in far off Rangoon there are five things that come to mind first," says Les Arnold; "the narrow escape we had from losing our commander when Lowell took down with dysentery, the most dreaded disease in the orient; the collision of the New Orleans and a Burmese river boat, the club life of the Europeans exiled out there, the charm of the maidens of Burma, and the marvelous golden pagodas.

Native Water Causes Illness.

"When dysentary hits a man it usually lasts for weeks, and our first night in Rangoon, Lowell took down wih a serious attack. The English doctor whom we called said that it was undoubtedly the result of his having drank some of the water that the natives had brought out the afternoon of our forced landing in the lagoon in Indo-China. While I was gone for hours trying to wheedle the priests at a nearby village into selling us enough of their sacramental wine to keep us going until a rescuing party could find us, the heat was so intense and his thirst so great that he decided to risk a few swallows of the water on which the natives seemed to thrive. But centuries of living in the tropics makes the native practically immune to many of the diseases that worry the white man. The doctor advised that Lowell be taken to a bungalow in Rangoon where he could be kept quiet. And we saw ourselves faced with a possible delay of two or three weeks.

"That same night another ill wind blew our way. A party of sailors had been detailed to stand by the planes during the night. But along after midnight, while we were all sleeping off the effects of our nerve-wracking flight across the Malay jungle from Siam, an unweildy Burmese river boat came drifting down the Irrawaddy from Mandalay with her huge sail bulging. We had already gotten off to one side of the main course of this mighty river which is to Burma what the Nile is to Egypt. We had done this to escape these very boats that came down to Rangoon with their cargoes of rice, and to keep the planes from being smashed to matchwood by the enormous rafts of teak logs that drift down from the forests of upper Burma.

Another Close Shave.

"But the Burman at the rudder of this particular boat must have been snoozing, realizing that no matter if he did collide with some other craft it would have little effect on his heavy-timbered leviathan of the river. When the sailors saw this huge hulk, with its queer-shaped sail, silhouetted against the starless sky it was almost too late for them to prevent her from riding down the three planes. The Burmans on board paid no attention to the shouts of the guards as they dashed up to the great rice boat in their launch. The New Orleans was the nearest plane in danger. Realizing they had only a few minutes in which to save her, one of the sailors clambered up the carved stern of the Burmese craft and shoved the rudder over hard. The others in the launch threw their little cockleshell between the plane and the oncoming Burmese sloop. The quick action of the man who had seized the rudder from the astonished Burman, combined with the sheer strength of his comrades in the launch, who shoved against the rice boat, prevented a headon collison.

Sailors' Alertness Saves Day.

"When the crash came it was only a glancing blow but it smashed half the bottom wing on the left side. If it hadn't been for the presence of mind of the the sailors on guard the New Orleans and Erik and Jack would have been out of the flight.

"This accident meant that we would be held up here at Rangoon for a number of days, no matter how Smith's attack of dysentery progressed.

"While the repair work was going on we took turnes motoring in to see Smith and to purchase little things that we needed. This gave us an opportunity to see something of the life of the Burmese who lived between us and the business section of Rangoon, and we also spent several evenings at the clubs, the Gymkhana and the Pegu, where the European throws off the white man's burden at night and attempts to forget that he is thousands of miles from Pall Mall and Piccadilly.

The club out east of the Suez, is a unique institution. It is the place where the European attempts to cut himself off from the life of the country in which he stays just long enough to make sufficient money out of teak or jute or rice or tea to enable him to return and spend the rest of his days fox hunting in Sussex or golfing at St. Andrews. While his wife plays bridge he sits around with his comrades-in-exile consuming endless chotapegs served by silent Bengali boys.

Colder Climate More Desirable.

"It's an alluring life, a life of languid hours, whispered scandals, waving punkas, and clinking glasses. But it was so hot that we were already getting out our map of the world and figuring how many days it would be until we reached Iceland and Greenland.

"Each afternoon, when the work on the planes was finished, everybody would plunge into the large swimming pool that our English friends had out there near the flying headquarters. After a day of perspiring in that steamy, humid, broiling climate, it was certainly a relief to play water polo for an hour or so, and then sit in a long chair sipping a long cool drink. This bungalow where we were entertained was built high up in the air on piles as a precaution against snakes, scorpions, centipedes and other creeping and crawling things that increase the white man's burden out east.

Burman Vamps Smoke Cigars

"The Burman women intrigued us. With their gay umbrellas, bright-colored silk skirts, cute little white shirtwaists, hair piled up in black, shiny coil adorned with fragapani blossoms, faces coated with rice powder, and puffing away on cigars from six to 10 inches long, they are utterly unlike any women we had encountered thus far. The Burmans seem to be a gay, light-hearted people, as full of color in their own lives and actions as the costumes they wear. We were told by the English flying people that they were often referred to as the Irish of the east.

"Like the Siamese, they are Buddhists, and there is a pagoda on every hill. But there is one on a hill overlooking the city that is a sight we shall never forget. It is the Shwe Dagon, the largest pagoda in the world, all covered with gold from base to the tip of its jewel-covered spire. It was the first thing we saw as we approached Rangoon on our flight up from the Malaya, and its golden 'ti' glittering in the morning sunlight was the last bit of this great oriental metropolis that we saw as we winged our way over the paddy fields and thousand waterways of the Irrawaddy delta toward India.

Fly Away From Teak Land.

"The English doctor who was taking care of Lowell worked nothing short of a miracle in pulling him around in three days from an illness that usually knocks people out for six or seven times that period. When the New Orleans had been repaired and we were ready to take off Lowell refused to stay in bed any longer. So on Wednesday, June 25, with not a breath of air stirring and the Irrawaddy as smooth as glass, we left the land of teak, of whackin' white cheroots, Buddhist monks, and golden pagodas. The Boston and New Orleans got onto their pontoon steps by following the waves left in the wake of an ocean steamer. Then Wade dove down in front of us and let his pontoons touch the water just enough to put a few ripples in it, just enough to enable us to get off.

"When it comes to delicacy of touch, and sheer finesse, I doubt if the airman ever lived who surpassed Leigh Wade. If you can make a plane that is making 90 miles an hour, come down and daintily touch your pontoons to the water so that they are barely an inch below the surface, and then run along like that for a mile, you are a wizard. And that's what Wade did.

"We saved quite a long distance by cutting straight across the Irrawaddy delta toward India instead of immediately heading west into the Bay of Bengal. Ahead of us lay the little seaport that has been a hoodoo to nearly all of the aviators who have passed this way. Sir Ross Smith's supply ship full of gasoline and oil had blown up not far from Akyab. A number of other planes had cracked up near it. McLaren, the British world flyer, had crashed and been laid up there for many weeks. So, as Ragoon—and the Irrawaddy river vanished into the haze behind us, we could not help but wonder what effect Akyab's black magic was going to have on us."

Read the next installment of the thrilling story of the round-the-world flight in The Omaha Bee tomorrow.

COURT HOLDS JOHN EASON WILL VALID

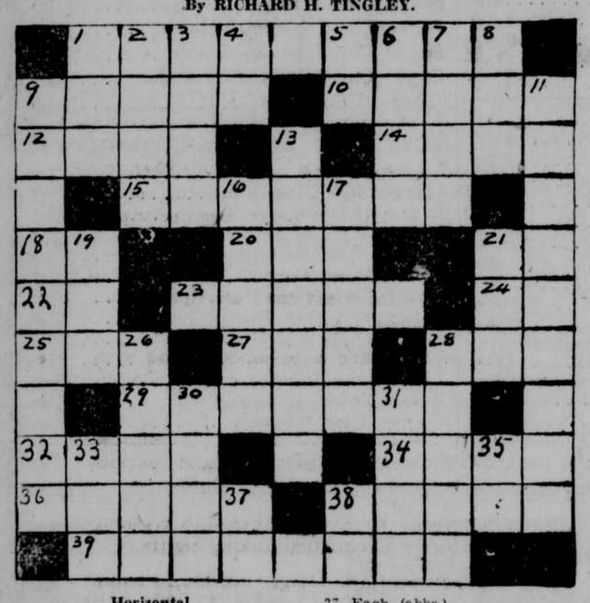
Randolph, Jan. 2.—Judge Wilbur F. Bryant, Cedar county judge, has handed down a decision holding valid the will of the late John Eason and admitting it to probate.

The contest, one of the most fiercely contested in Cedar county court for a long time, involved several thousand dollars bequeathed to churches, hospitals and individuals in this locality, Randolph having been the home of Mr. Eason, a bachelor.

Suit to set aside the will was brought by a nephew living in Wisconsin, who alleged that Eason was mentally incapable of making a will.

The Daily Cross Word Puzzle

By RICHARD H. TINGLEY.



Horizontal.

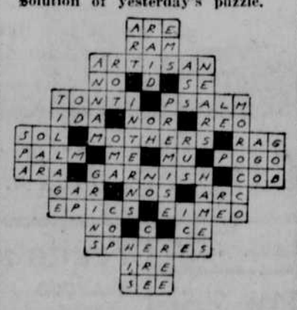
1. Openings.
9. A semi-precious stone.
10. Tops.
12. South American balsim.
14. One of the Great Lakes.
15. Warnings.
18. Diminutive ending.
20. To find the sum of.
21. Point of compass.
22. Section of the United States (abbr.).
23. To move easily.
24. A Preposition.
25. A receptacle.
27. Land measure.
28. A southern state (abbr.).
29. Classifies.
32. Head (French).
34. The alter end of a church.
36. To excite.
38. A food.
39. A resident of a region of interest in the great war.

Verticai.

1. Past time.
2. Close friends.
3. Case for small articles.
4. In regard to—.
5. In a higher place.
6. To stagger.
7. Head appendages.
8. Foot sled.
9. To reduce in flesh.
11. Honored with a song.
13. Support for firewood.
16. Festivities.
17. Viper.
19. Ever (contraction).
21. Sun.
26. Pertaining to a birthday.
28. A poplar.
30. A tropical food plant.
33. High in the Guido scale.
35. A countinent (abbr.).
37. Each (abbr.).
38. Two (prefix).

The solution will appear tomorrow.

Solution of yesterday's puzzle.



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