

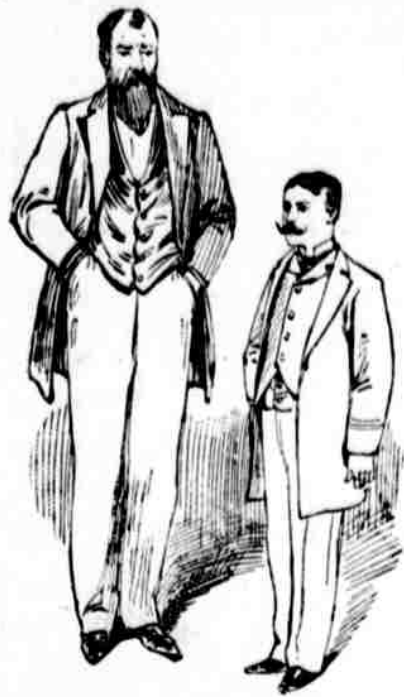
FROM THE CAPITAL.

THERE ARE SOME HANDSOME MEN IN THE LOWER HOUSE.

Big General Curtis, of New York, and His Big Beard—Little Ben Cable, of Illinois, and His Mustache—John Allen, the Humorist.

(Special Correspondence.)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—There are some fine looking men in the new house of representatives. This is distinctively a smooth faced house of commons. Just after the elections of a year ago some one discovered that in nearly every case in which a beardless man had been pitted against one with a beard on his face the former had won. At the time this statement was generally regarded as a joke, or as a conclusion drawn from two or three instances, which in no wise established a rule. But when we come to look over the faces of the men sent to



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT.

the cyclone congress it is plain to see that in the famous congressional fight of 1890 the smooth faced men had the luck and the other fellows the hoodoo. Just how many smooth faced men there are in the house I cannot say, but it is certain that not since the war has there been such a large number of them as there is today.

Among them are some remarkably fine looking men too. Faces sure to attract attention in any gathering are those of young Bailey of Texas, Bryan of Nebraska, Tom Johnson of Ohio, Storer of Cincinnati, Miller (the Greek) from Wisconsin, Fellows of New York, Scott Wike of Illinois, McGann of Chicago and many others unadorned by hirsute appendages. It is a noteworthy fact that, with a few exceptions, all the smooth faces are on the Democratic side of the hall, though both sides are Democratic nowadays, inasmuch as the majority members have spread themselves over a large section of the space devoted to the minority. By arrangement the Democrats took possession of one tier of seats on the Republican side of the hall, and this tier is commonly known as "the Cherokee Strip." Some of the best men in the party sit in the strip, apart from the majority of their friends.

It happens that the biggest man in the house, General Curtis, of New York, has one of the biggest beards. General Curtis is a giant who stands 6 feet 6 inches in his stocking feet, and though comparatively slender weighs 250 pounds. Since taking his seat in the house General Curtis has been busy forming anew the acquaintance of men who knew him in the troublous days of the war, and among those who have taken the big hero's hand are many who fought on the Confederate side. The fame of General Curtis as a fighter spread throughout the armies near the close of the war and has not yet been forgotten. He was promoted four or five times for gallant services on the field, was wounded in the breast in an engagement in southwest Virginia and lost an eye in the charge at Fort Fisher.

An odd sort of friendship has sprung up between Mr. Cable, of Illinois, and General Curtis. Why they should be drawn together is more than their friends can understand, for they appear to have nothing in common. One is the biggest man in the house and the other the smallest—"the long and the short of it"—one a Democrat and the other a Republican, and while the giant was a hero in the civil war, the little man was not old enough to fight with anything more dreadful than lead soldiers. Curtis has a long, patriarchal beard, while Cable has one of the cutest little mustaches you ever saw. The young Illinoisian is so slender and so boyish looking that he is sometimes called a dude, but as a matter of fact he is a manly man, an athlete, a great traveler, an adventurer who has known what it is to face danger. Out in Rock Island, where he lives, he is known to every one as Ben Cable, and though a very rich man, being the son of the president of the Rock Island railway, many of his warmest friends and most intimate companions are poor young men whom he has known at school or in business.

One story is told of Cable which is too good to suppress. When he decided to make the race for congress in a district which had previously given a large majority against his party, he went to an old politician and asked him his advice as to how to carry on a successful campaign. The old politician gave him a number of valuable hints, and added: "Just one word more. You are popular in this district. You can make a good campaign. But there is one thing you must do or be defeated. It is a simple thing, and yet I fear you will not do it." "What is that?" "Give up smoking cigarettes till after election. Can you do it?" Young Mr. Cable was silent for some minutes. It was apparent that a struggle was going on in his mind between the allurements of a seat in congress and the joy of cigarette smoking. In the

UP A BORNEO RIVER.

A CHAPTER FROM THE LIFE OF AN ENTHUSIASTIC TRAVELER.

Borneo is a Country Where if You Would Walk You Must Go in a Boat—Architecture, Cooking, Fishing, Music—Other Matters.

(Special Correspondence.)

LONDON, Dec. 12.—Borneo is one of those places where, as Paddy would say, all land travel must be done by water, for Stanley himself would find it hard to force a way through the bristling mass of impenetrable jungle—too tough and pliant to be cut down and too full of moisture to be burned up—which fully bears out the eastern proverb, "An elephant cannot break it down, nor an ant wriggle through it." In fact, the thickets of Borneo, like those of South America or Central Africa, may be best conceived by imagining a forest of interlaced telegraph wires, relieved by an occasional patch of fishhooks or of penknives.

Thus, when you start on a journey here you hire a boat instead of a horse or a carriage, and inquire, not about the state of the roads, but about the tides and currents. Your native "house boat," with a roof overhead and windows along the sides, a cabin amidships for yourself, a small pantry farther aft, and a few little rabbit hutches at the stern for your Malay crew and servants, looks like a cross between an overgrown gondola and Noah's first attempt at an ark overcrowded by a false alarm of the deluge. The only novel feature is a huge staring eye painted on each side of the bow, since, as the Chinese boatbuilder will tell you, "Boat no have eye, no can see go."

The first twenty miles or so of the voyage are gloomy and monotonous enough. The river seems to have about a hundred miles, all exactly alike and all equally overshadowed by the black funeral mangroves, which stand so thick along either bank as to give you the feeling of sailing through a monster hairbrush with bristles twenty feet high. The cheerless twilight of the overarching thickets, the black, sullen, slimy waters, the close, damp, vapor bath atmosphere, the sickening orror of mud and decaying vegetation, the sudden starting up ever and anon through the thick, oily stream of the horny snout and huge notched tail of a monstrous crocodile, all combine to make this part of the journey rather depressing. Nor are matters much improved when you pass on to the swampy jungles of the fernlike "nipa" palm, which, however useful in furnishing atap (thatch) for native huts and house boats, becomes rather a bore when you see nothing else for twenty or thirty miles on end.

But by degrees the gloom lessens, the banks grow "high and dry," the hideous cobweb of swamp and thicket gives place to the firm forest land, and at length, sweeping around a sharp curve, you come all at once upon a view that might make any man wish himself a painter. A vast tower shaped mass of sandstone thrusts itself out like a pier into the broad, brown stream, crested along the summit with noble forest trees, while the successive ledges or terraces of its steep, crumbling face are planted with magnificent palmlike ferns, one sprig of which would have covered Goliath from head to foot.

In the base of this mighty cliff, just above the water's edge, yawns a deep black tunnel-like arch, all around which lie packets of rice and tobacco, strips of dried fish, deer horns, "incense sticks" and tiny red and white flags. Your Malay boatmen answer your inquiring look with an expressive gesture and the single word "hantus" (spirit), these offerings being in fact a kind of black-mail paid to the spirits of the cave, who might otherwise play unpleasant tricks on passing travelers.

By this time you will have passed four or five groups of rotting, tumble-down hovels, which were once thriving native hamlets, for before the coming of the English to establish order with a strong hand, this whole district was so mercilessly ravaged by pirates that it was gradually forsaken by its inhabitants, most of whom have never returned. But as you get farther away from the sea inhabited villages begin to multiply, and a very queer sight they are. All alike are built in the regular Malay fashion, every house being a little box of bamboos roofed with palm leaf thatch and raised high above the ground on strong piles, which makes all the huts look as if they were walking about on stilts. The only access is by a tangle of bamboo ladders, and in the middle of the floor there is always a large square hole, through which slops and refuse of every kind are emptied on to the ground below, till by degrees there forms underneath the house a perfect lake of miscellaneous filth, of which, as the Scottish gamekeeper said of his master's shooting, "The more said the less the better."

Nor is the cookery of this strange region less primitive than its architecture. Half way up the river you are regaled by a hospitable penghain (native chief) with a huge "chungk" of queer looking bluish-brown meat mixed with yellow fat, which tastes a good deal like rather gamy pork, but finally turns out to be chinceros, a kind of beef which (as any one who has been in south Africa will admit) is not so bad when nothing better can be got. A little farther on you fall in with another national dish which is even more remarkable. At one of the riverside villages two men come on board with a rather tough steak smelling strongly of musk, which they present to you as "ee-kan bezar" (big fish). And a very big fish it proves to be, for it is nothing else than crocodile, the Borneans having apparently the same theory of retribution as the Jamaica negro: "Aha, massa! land crab eat black um. Nebber mind. Black man eat he!"

Crocodile fishing is as favorite a sport in Borneo as salmon fishing in Europe, and at almost every bend of the river

you may see one of the traps set by the Dyak for his natural enemy. These are as simple as they are effective, consisting merely of two strong poles, planted enough to bend without breaking, lashed firmly together and set deep in the bank. To these poles is attached a stout rope, and to the end of this rope is fastened a short stick with both ends sharpened, and a dead monkey or something else equally palatable fixed upon it by way of bait. The crocodile, greedily swallowing the bait, gets this sharp peg stuck crosswise in his throat, and is then easily hauled in despite all his struggles, after which his captors enjoy a sumptuous feast upon his flesh and make shields of his scaly armor. Among the minor delicacies of the Dyak bill of fare, snake pie, stewed monkey and eggs kept till they can be scented half a mile off hold a prominent place. In the far interior, however, where pigs are largely reared by the non-Muslim tribes of the forest, you can at times vary this queer menu with a griskin or a spare rib, and, in fact, the one thing which still retards the conversion of these savages to the Moslem faith is their reluctance to give up pork.

In one of the higher reaches of the river you spy a small object floating down the stream toward you, which, as you near it, proves to be a pretty little miniature house of the native pattern, adorned with a profusion of tiny colored flags and fixed upon a bamboo raft as small as itself, the whole thing being no bigger than a doll's house or a child's "Noah's Ark." Altogether it is a very charming little toy, but if you show any inclination to seize it as it passes, your Malay crew will raise their voices in alarmed and clamorous remonstrance, and the tall, snawy Sarang (native boatswain) will say very gravely, "Orang sakit" (man sick), and will then proceed to explain that this little bark must have been launched by the friends of some Dyak invalid in a village higher up the river, in the hope that his illness may float away along with it, and if you meddle with it the disease will inevitably fasten upon some one on board your boat, or perhaps upon the whole ship's company at once.

About a mile farther on there appears suddenly round a sharp bend a real lantern (raft), such as one sees on the rivers of Siam—many yards in length and with a good sized hut in the middle of it—coming down toward us as if it were the mother of the infant raft that we have just passed in hot pursuit of her strayed baby. The presence of this strange craft is speedily and ominously accounted for by the sudden shallowing of the river, which is so beset with shoals and rapids just at this point that your whole crew have to leap out onto the bank and tow the boat by main force, wading the rough, knee deep and often waist deep masses of black mud beneath the full glare of the midday sun, while the considerate sarang encourages them with the comforting assurance that "even if they are drowned it is only nasseeb (fate)."

When Mr. Boatswain musters his men after the work is over, you will probably be not a little amazed at the peculiar names to which they answer. I remember having a native "boat gang" on the gold coast in west Africa, the roll call of which ran as follows: "Brass Pan, Pea Soup, Prince of Wales, Red Flannel, Duke of Cambridge, Bottle of Beer, No Shirt, Bad Penny, Squint Eye, Son of a Gun, Devil's Father." But this queer muster roll would pass quite unnoticed in the interior of Borneo, where one is met at every turn by such names as "Kaloog" (worm), "Ubi" (potato), "Seepnt" (sea slug), "Hariman" (tiger), "Ular" (snake), "Rossa" (deer), "Bunya" (crocodile), and "Pisang" (banana).

In spite of their queer names, however, the Malay boatmen are for the most part very patient, good humored fellows, easily enough managed by any one who knows how to deal with them. Many of them are decided "dudes" in their way, and those who belong to the government steam launches take great pride in their smart dress of white trousers, scarlet cap, girdle of crimson silk and blue frock, with a broad white "man-of-war" collar, thrown back over the shoulders.

They are very fond of music, often tuning the beat of their paddles to some quaint old Malay song, and when they have brought you to the village whither you are bound and are off duty for a time, instead of going to sleep, as you would expect, they often sit up half the night singing and telling stories. Many of the songs are improvised on the spot, and the jokes and personal hits which are freely handled about on such occasions are always received with hearty laughter. Of the stories, I translate one as a specimen of the rest:

"Two men had a dispute about a woman, each declaring that she was his wife. The one was a learned man, the other a peasant who cultivated padi (rice) in the fields. Being unable to agree, they went to the kazi (judge) and stated their case. It was a difficult matter, and as if to make it more difficult still the woman did that which is hardest of all things for women to do—she held her tongue and spake not a word. Then said the kazi, 'Leave the woman here and return tomorrow.' They all saluted and retired, and on the morrow he gave the woman to the learned man, and sentenced the peasant to fifty stripes with a rattan. 'This morning,' said he, 'I bade this woman fill my inkstand, and she did so like one well used to the task, which, had she been a peasant's wife, she could never have learned to do.' Then all men wondered at the judge's shrewdness, and the fame of his wisdom spread far and wide."

A Fast Speaker.
The Boston stenographers do not like to report the sermons of Bishop Brooks. He started off a recent sermon at the rattling rate of 200 words a minute, and he surpassed this gait as he got warmed up with his subject. Four of the stenographers who had been sent by different papers to report the sermon were knocked out in a few minutes, and the others had to rest content with taking down such passages as they could catch.

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