

CHINA and RUSSIA in the GRIP OF FAMINE



THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AT CHINKIANG

Boston.—On the treeless steppes of Russia, beyond the "pale," and in the arid districts of northeastern China, thousands of human beings are dying for want of food. Lack of rain in the first instance, excess of it in the second is the cause.

Five provinces in China and 21 in Russia are affected, and, while from the former country come awful tales of the bartering of human flesh for food, of the sale of little children, and of the breaking out of the plague among the close-packed sufferers, from Russia comes a wall of despair, where men, women and children are trying to cling to life, with almost nothing to eat and with no fuel in a temperature of 25 degrees below zero.

Conditions are such in both countries that it is estimated that what in this country would be the price of a single visit to the theater would save a human life until returning crops bring self-support.

The Christian Herald of New York, which has taken charge of the American end of the Chinese famine relief, pledged itself to supply 10,000,000 pounds of flour, corn, cornmeal, medical supplies, etc., in addition to what had already been sent. The government gave the army transport Gen. Buford to carry this consignment from San Francisco to Shanghai.

Government Aid Inadequate.

In Russia the famine is being relieved to some extent by government aid, but the restrictions this aid carries with it make it very inadequate. It involves the delivery of one pound of bread a day only to sufferers less than 17 and more than 59 years of age. Infants under one year, and all the vast majority between 17 and 59 get nothing except what the unselfish among the more fortunate are willing to share. And, above and beyond this, there is the fact that the black hand of Russian official graft appropriates for private ends at least one-half of the money the government voted for relief.

Bishop Potter, of New York, is president and Dr. Samuel J. Barrows, formerly of Boston, is secretary of the American relief for Russia.

It is hard to judge between the two, but perhaps the situation in China is the more pitiable at present. Statistics gathered early in February in one of the five stricken Chinese provinces showed a total of 23,000 deaths. This is but a small section of the awful aggregate.

A foreign correspondent writing in description of the affected districts says: "Every semblance of grass plants and roots has disappeared, and starving parents are eating their children. I know this to be true, and have myself found human flesh on sale."

Three Months in Famine's Grip.

The district involved in the famine is known as "Kianpeh," meaning "north of the river," the stream being the Yangtze. For more than three months this region in northern China has been in the remorseless grasp of famine and famine-bred disease. Forty days of rain and consequent floods heaped calamity upon the 40,000 square miles of territory and its 15,000,000 people. Before new crops can be raised it is estimated that, despite the best efforts for relief, the death list will exceed that of Naples, San Francisco and Jamaica rolled into one.

Writing after a tour through one of the famine camps of 30,000 starving refugees, a correspondent said recently: "Little more than an hour ago I saw two women, presumably mother and grandmother, wailing over the tiny coffin of a child that had been part of grim famine's daily toll."

"It is all so horrible, so overpowering, so haunting, so heartrending, that one cannot write of it in orderly fashion. It seems as if only the repeated cry of 'Help! Help! Help!' can be fashioned for the ears of the prosperous American people, to whom God has given a year of plenty, while the poor of China perish from want."

"Out of the awful mass of suffering a succession of individual pictures comes trooping before my vision. There was the man, too weak to stand erect, who bore on his back, as older brothers carry babies in China, his blind old mother, the mere skin-and-bone framework of a woman. They wanted help, and pleaded for it in the thin whine of the utterly miserable—and I dared not give them so much as a copper!"

The Mother's Suffering.

"Or that mother, hard-eyed and

rigid, who stood against a wall with her six children gathered about her tattered skirts, staring out uncaring on a company of living refugees, who are a more melancholy sight than the thousands of ancient graves among which they are encamped. They had been fed—one portion of thin, watery rice porridge for them all—and now they must wait in the cold for another 24 hours to pass before they can be fed again—and even then some stronger ones may push them aside and steal their turn at the meager relief.

"Strange incongruities flash into one's mind as he walks about among these 30,000 refugees. As I passed this morning an old, old woman, covered only by a few rags, who sat on the cold, bare ground, sharing her small bowl of rice with a babe of 12 or 18 months, evidently her grandchild, who sat on her knees, I thought of some grandmothers whom I know in America—sweet-faced and comfortable and kindly, whose evening of life is made pleasant by the love of children and grandchildren, and who know not the word want. And I recalled some baby friends—sweet, ruddy little dears, wrapped in the finest linen, with wardrobes upon which love has lavished its generosity, and whose food is a matter of careful consultation with physicians and friends.

"Of course, I cannot imagine these delicately nurtured babes in dirty tatters and exposed to the cold winter night and day, week after week, yet somehow one picture suggests the other. Just so, when a refugee mother accosted us this morning and asked us to accept her child as a gift, imagination brought instantly to view the preciousness of the American children I know.

Suffering Unparalleled.

"Incidents could be piled upon incidents; every one of these 30,000 refugees incarnates a story—a story of a home abandoned, of toilsome journeys to this southern district in the hope of finding a pittance of food to allay that awful gnawing of hunger; of the eager hunt for a sheltered nook in a doorway; of being driven from spot to spot, until at last a few feet of bare earth are secured out among the graves with the other refugees—a space no bigger than a Chinese grave suffices for an entire Chinese family; of the daily and nightly huddling together in one mass for the sake of human warmth; of the search for dry grass with which to make a tiny fire; of the morning struggle for a portion of the government rice and of that indescribable, terrible, primitive duel between life and starvation which the Chinese so dauntlessly endure.

"In all this, I write of the best, and not of the worst. This is only the first outpost of the famine district.

Always Close to Starvation.

"The Chinese live closer to actual starvation than it is possible for a westerner to comprehend; they are always poor. So the failure of the crops—not to mention the destruction of their homes by flood—at once placed them in a state of actual destitution, which can only be relieved when the wheat crop is harvested in July. Meanwhile, owing to lack of seed, only half of the spring wheat crop has been planted."

The cargo of food which the Christian Herald sent over to the stricken district in China cost \$100,000, and this sum was raised by popular subscription.

Its arrival in China is expected to do much for the sufferers, but more food will have to follow at once. Conditions have grown steadily worse, and plague has broken out in one or two of the provinces. The sufferers are huddled together in thousands in the camps.

Millions Face Death.

In Russia the conditions are little less appalling. For the first time in the history of such catastrophes in Russia the government itself is aroused to the necessity for relieving the stress. The famine affects no less than 30,000,000 peasants inhabiting an area half as large as the United States, and while this area lies between the steppes and "White Russia," the famine is affecting indirectly the people within the "pale" who depend upon the peasants for trade and commerce.

The peasantry represents 85 per cent. of the entire population. Their one means of livelihood is farming, and when the rain did not come to

make their crops grow the past season their only hope of sustenance was gone.

Last year in more than 1,500,000 square miles of Russian territory there was sowing but no reaping. The peasants hopefully put their little store of seed grain into the ground. When the arid land failed to return a crop, not only were they robbed of the fruits of their toil, but their seed grain itself, which might have served as food, was gone. There was nowhere to turn for work or succor. Hundreds of miles away there were cities, but the few daring ones who reached them sent back the hopeless words: "No work."

Wholesale "Grafting."

In 1891, when the famine killed hundreds, the Russian government hit upon the expedient of forbidding the word "hunger," but the famine of the present is so much greater that the government is fully alive to it. Besides having appropriated \$35,000,000 already, it is now negotiating a loan of \$37,000,000 more for famine relief. But even this sum is totally inadequate to the work in hand, especially as half of the money will line the pockets of official grafters to whom the deaths of thousands of poor peasants is merely an unfortunate incident in their own short cut to wealth.

At present the relief work in Russia consists of doling out a pound of bread a day to sufferers. The aged and minors get nothing.

Some families of five or six have perhaps two who draw bread. Other families have none. If two of a family of six draw bread and divide it equally it means that each member eats one-third of a pound a day. The regular diet of a Russian peasant is five pounds of bread daily. Thus the most fortunate are now existing upon one-fifteenth of their regular fare, or, to an American who has three square meals a day, two meals in three weeks.

The very seeds of the weeds have been eaten and the ground has been stripped of every green thing. The little horses have all been sold or eaten, and the occasional cows, too. Nothing remains but the hope of relief from the outside. There is no wood for fires and many families have joined together in one house for warmth, tearing the other dwellings down for fuel.

It is estimated that in the province of Samara alone there will be 200,000 deaths in a total population of 3,000,000, and others of the 21 provinces affected will have like averages.

Seek Aid of the World.

Determined efforts are now being made to enlist the sympathy of the world with the suffering, ignorant peasants, and emissaries have been sent to this and other countries. M. Shiskoff, who is in America to enlist aid, says that \$8 will save the life of an adult and that \$5 will keep a child from dying.

The immigrants to Boston from Russia are mostly people from the "pale" and they are taxed several times a year to help their persecuted friends and relatives at home. It is estimated that delegates from Russia took not less than \$5,000 out of Boston last year to help the victims of persecution; and probably \$5,000 more was sent across the sea to individuals, either to relieve suffering or to help them to emigrate.

To the Russian Jews in this city the famine tragedy now enacting is the climax of misery long drawn out. They will do what they can, but as one of the men at the civic service house on Salem street said the other day: "Where our people can get more money to send to Russia is a puzzle; they have drained their purses time and time again; and now it remains for all the charitable in general over here to do their share."

The famine means a tremendous setback to Russia. At present the problem is how to obtain food. Later will come the question of the future of provinces whose people have lost farms, animals and savings and have no money. Friends of Russia, however, see promise of better times ahead, although this necessarily involves a vast amount of work. The hope of the peasant in the famine area lies in his education in modern farming methods to take the place of the thousand-year-old customs which he still follows and in the installation of great systems of irrigation so that crops may be grown even when the rain fails.

Discovered Compound for Burning Ashes.



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John Ellmore, a cobbler of Altoona, Pa., says that he has discovered a compound for burning ashes which will revolutionize the industrial world. He says that tests have demonstrated that ashes treated with the compound make a fire hotter and at the same time cheaper than the fire produced by the burning of coal. Should the new process prove practicable, it is asserted, the price of fuel, especially coal, will be reduced to but a fraction of its present cost. Another advantage claimed for the new compound is that it almost wholly does away with smoke.

COAL IN SPITZBERGEN.

ANTHRACITE DEPOSITS OF GREAT VALUE BEING WORKED.

Mines on West Coast Have Proved Most Profitable—First of Arctic Islands to Send Fuel to Market.

Washington.—The prospect brightens that Spitzbergen may become a source of anthracite of some importance. The more the archipelago is examined, the more promising, it is said, are the coal mining prospects along some of the coasts, and in a number of the valleys. The railway, which was built three years ago a little inland from Advent bay to bring coal down to the shore, is to be extended further into the main island to tap new sources of supply recently discovered. This is in about 78 degrees north latitude, or a little more than 800 statute miles from the north pole. In order to make the short railroad already in operation available the year around the miners built it all the way under cover. Many tons have been hauled down to the shore on these tracks to await the arrival of steamers that have carried several loads of excellent coal to European markets.

The chief discoveries of coal have been made in Ice fiord, the deep indentation of the west coast, and especially in Advent bay, where the railroad was built. Here about 50 miners are living in small, warm dwellings. They have already proved the practicability of winter mining, and two years ago they installed electricity to illumine the long Arctic night in the coal mine, and in their little settlement, so that they may add to the coal output every month in the year. It was in Advent bay that Mr. Conway, who made the first crossing of Spitzbergen, replenished the coal supply of his little steamer 11 years ago.

The world will not be indifferent to any important coal resources which the Arctic regions may afford. Some day it may be drawing appreciable supplies from Greenland, and news of fresh discoveries of coal in any part of the accessible Arctic will be heard with interest.

Meanwhile Spitzbergen, the first of the Arctic islands to send coal to market and to be the goal of tourists

every summer, is still a neglected waif whom none of the family of nations has yet sought to adopt. Some benevolent party of tourists may give it a flag of its own, unless the protection of one of the nations is extended over it.

SNIFF KISS ORIGINAL CARESS.

Ancients Did Not Understand Art of Osculation, Says Professor.

Philadelphia.—The climax of interest at the recent session of the American Oriental society was reached when Prof. Hopkins of Yale read his paper on "The Sniff Kiss in Ancient India."

The paper was a history of the kiss as we know it. The learned professor traced it from its birth and proved that the earliest peoples and earliest times knew it not. That there might be no mistake he labeled the kiss of to-day "the genuine kiss" and "the perfect kiss." Oddly enough, he finds that the genuine kiss was invented by a woman. The description is given in the epic of ancient India which treats of the science of love.

"She laid her mouth to my mouth," recites the poet, "and made a noise which gave me pleasure."

With that discovery, said Prof. Hopkins, grew the fashion which has since known no abatement.

"The early peoples," he continued, "knew nothing of the kiss in any form. Had they known of it they would have told something of it in the mass of records that has come down to us, for, surely, an act which conveys such pleasure could not have been forgotten."

"With the development of the genuine kiss, the sniff kiss disappeared, never to reappear. It had served its purpose and soon was forgotten."

Mothers Have 38 Children.

San Francisco, Cal.—Statistics prepared by the immigration board at this port show that according to the claims of all the Chinese who swore they are native born every Chinese woman in this country must have been the mother of 38 children. This interesting condition was made known when the figures collected from various points in the country were tabulated.

SOCIETY OF ETERNAL YOUTH.

New Iowa Organization Fines All Sick Members.

Des Moines, Ia.—"The First Society of Eternal Youth" is the name of an organization founded here, which has for its object the prolongation of life, and which purposes to fine every member who becomes sick. That the association is in earnest is evidenced by the fact that 100 men already have enrolled in the scheme, the preamble of which reads as follows:

The special object and business of this society shall be to renew and perpetuate the mental, moral and physical youth and strength of all its members; to build up and continue in the highest degree the mental vigor in each individual member; and imperatively requiring from each and every member that he live the life of health, thereby contributing his share in banishing the specter of disease and death from the face of the earth.

Any member who is reported sick from any disease, and so remains sick and is confined to his bed for a continuous period of three days or more, shall be fined in a sum not less than one dollar nor more than ten dollars for the first offense. For the second offense under this article any member shall be suspended from membership, and for the third offense of any member in violation of this article expulsion from the society shall be the penalty.

All members upon joining must sign a pledge that he or she will continually assert that there is nothing but custom and habit of thought that causes people to be sick, grow old, or die.

Nitrate of Soda to Be Imported.

Mobile, Ala.—The first cargo of nitrate of soda ever brought to this port has arrived on board the steamer Brantwood from Chili. Further shipments will follow to supply not only the territory adjacent, but those points in the middle west where the inland freight is cheaper than from Baltimore and Philadelphia.

A few cargoes have been received at New Orleans during the past 18 months. Nitrate is used in this country for a variety of purposes, the principal ones being for the manufacture of powder and fertilizers; particularly in the latter field consumption of same has increased rapidly, especially in the south.

Chili, it is said, is the only country in the world where nitrate of commercial value is found.

Etiquette of a Real Gent.

Weary Willie—I'll talk straight, sport. I'm dyin' fur a drink. Gimme a quarter, will yer? Gailey—But you don't need a quarter to buy one drink. Weary Willie—One? Why, I ain't de kind of a gent w'at'll drink at anudder gent's expense an' not ask him ter join me.

WILL EAT SALTPETER

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO SETTLE MOOTED QUESTIONS.

Year's Experiments in Interest of Beef-Eating Public—One-Half to Be Fed on Meat Cured with Solution.

New York.—For a period of from six to twelve months a squad of vigorous and healthy men will be the subjects upon whom a small company of savants, working in the interests of humanity in general and beef-eaters in particular, will test the effects of meat that has been cured with saltpeter and other supposedly injurious preservatives.

This was settled the other day, when what will be known as the national commission for the investigation of nutrition problems was formed in New York at the Fifth Avenue hotel.

This organization will act under the auspices of the University of Illinois and it is composed of Prof. H. S. Grindley of that institution, Prof. R. H. Chittenden of Yale university, Prof. J. J. Abel of Johns Hopkins university and Prof. A. P. Mathews of Chicago university.

The movement was inaugurated by Prof. Edmund J. James of the University of Illinois, who will also take an active part in its progress. The experiments will be carried on at the University of Illinois, and it is said that they will be the most thorough of the kind ever undertaken in the United States.

"There has been great difference of opinion among experts," said Prof. Grindley, "as to the effect of certain preservatives used in the curing of meat and the commission will direct its attention first to the determination of some of these important questions. The first experiments will be to discover the effects upon the human body of the saltpeter used in curing meats."

"It is a well-known fact that saltpeter taken in considerable quantities is a poison, but whether the small amount consumed by the eating of cured meats is in any way injurious has long been a mooted question."

"The data obtained will be of prime importance in aiding the enforcement of the present pure food laws and of the utmost importance in aiding in the formulation of further just regulations as to the use of this and other preservatives in food products."

The "saltpeter squad," as it might be called, will be boarded in a specially equipped house in such a way that the weight of all foods eaten by each man can be accurately determined, and the food completely analyzed. A physician will keep a daily record of the physical condition and health of each member of the squad.

The diet of half the men will include cured meat products now on the market containing saltpeter and the other half will be fed on a diet exactly similar except that the cured meats will contain none of the preservatives.

Another interesting feature of the experiments will be that efforts will be made to have the men housed pleasantly and their meals so presented to them as to eliminate if possible the influence of the mental condition of the squad on the processes of digestion and nutrition.

It is the purpose of the commission also to make experiments of a similar kind upon the lower animals, so that at the end of the work the animals may be killed and a thorough examination made by the most approved methods to determine the effect of the saltpeter upon the internal organs connected with the processes of digestion and assimilation.

TO END ROCKING OF SHIPS.

British Expert Offers Hope to Seasick Travelers.

London.—Ships that will not rock is the heavenly dream of Sir William White, late chief constructor of the British navy, held out to ocean travelers as likely to be realized at some future time.

Sir William put before the members of the Institution of Naval Architecture recently the results of experiments with Dr. Schlick's gyroscopic apparatus for steadying ships. The experiments were carried out on a German first-class torpedo boat, the apparatus (a flywheel one meter in diameter, oscillating on trunnions, and making up to 3,000 revolutions a minute) being placed in a compartment before the boiler room.

In all cases, said Sir William White, the practical effect was to extinguish the rolling motion of a ship almost immediately. The torpedo boat was practically deprived of rolling motion, and was simply subjected to heaving motions. To use Dr. Schlick's words:

"The waves seemed to disappear under her, and she rose with a gentle motion vertically upwards, and sank again just as gently into the trough of the sea without even spray coming on board to any extent worth mentioning."

Steamships of high speed, continued Sir William, formed a class in which the steadying effect of gyroscopes would be of great advantage, and there would be no difficulty in fitting them. It might be anticipated that experiments would be made before long with gyroscopic apparatus in destroyers and in the smaller classes of cruisers.