King Cotton in China and Child Labor in the Big Mills at Shanghai

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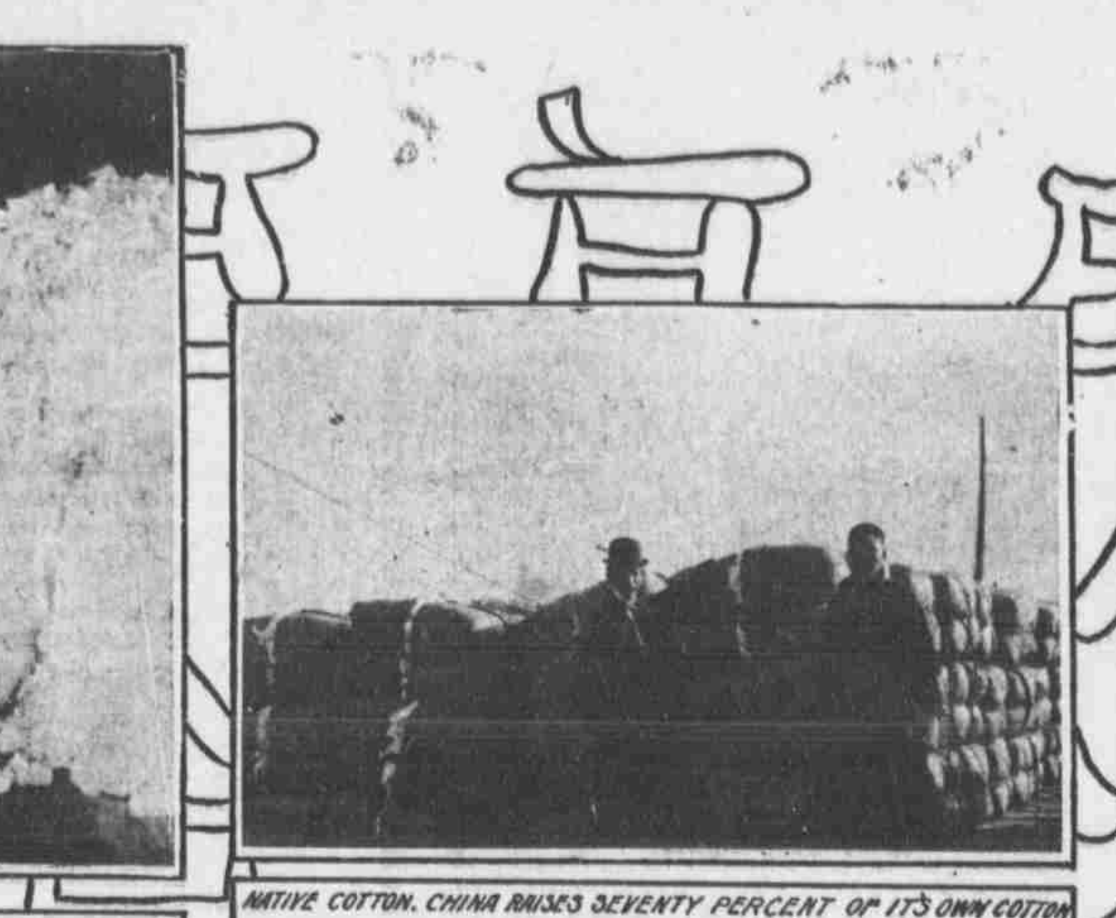
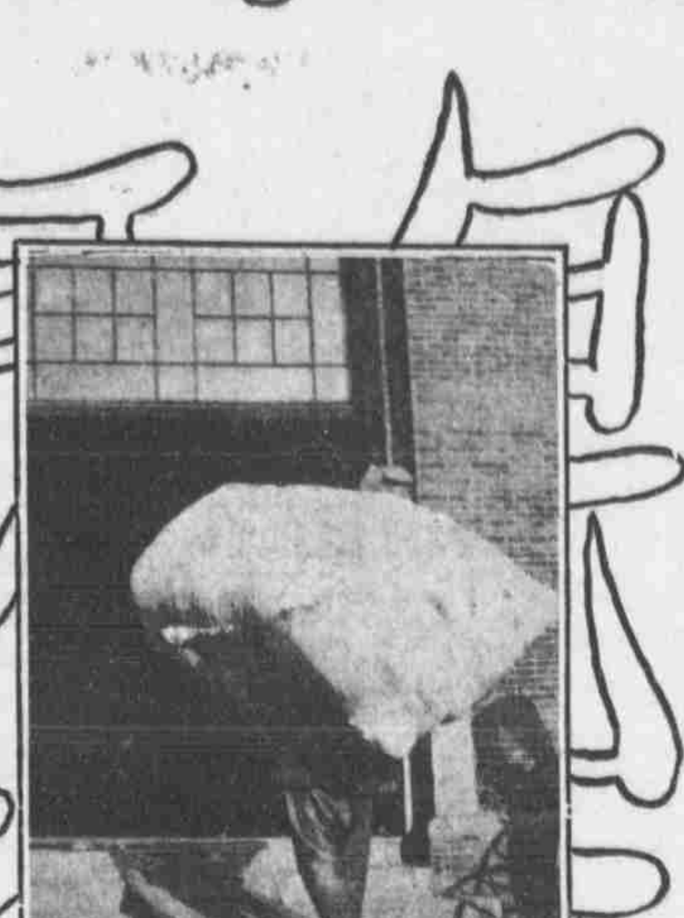
SHANGHAI, 1909.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—The growth of Shanghai beats that of the gourd of Jonah, which sprang up in a night. It is now a modern European city. It has business blocks which might be dropped down in New York or London and not be out of place, and residences which would be fine in Washington or Paris. Along the Bund, the wide road which faces the river, are a dozen or more banks whose capital runs into the tens of millions and whose managers are so trusted that they can dip into the pockets of the nations and draw out at pleasure. On the same street are club houses, some of which have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to build. There are big hotels where you can live as well as at home, and shops, with plate glass windows, containing European goods of every description. Shanghai is the Paris of the far east. It is one of the richest cities of Asia, and it takes the best of all that is going.

IN A SHANGHAI MILL


NATIVE COTTON. CHINA RAISES SEVENTY PERCENT OF IT'S OWN COTTON


IT IS UNLOADED BY COOLIES WHO CARRY IT UPON THEIR HEADS

CHINESE CHILD LABOR. MUCH OF THE WORK IN THE COTTON MILLS IS DONE BY CHILDREN AT 4 CTS. A DAY.

In the Big Cotton Mills.

Shanghai is preparing to manufacture for the new China. It is putting up factories and foundries and starting all sorts of new industries. It has silk filatures which are producing bales of raw silk for our American weavers, modern flour mills equipped with Milwaukee machinery, and a cigarette factory owned by the American Tobacco Trust, which employs more than 1,000 hands. It has eight great cotton mills with several hundred thousand spindles, and some which have 80,000 or 90,000 spindles in a single establishment. In these mills over 30,000 Chinese men, women and children are employed, and they are spinning and weaving cotton quite as well as in any of our American factories. The most of them are managed by Chinese foremen and they give some idea of how the Celestials expect to make their own cloth in the future.

During my stay here I have visited some of the biggest of the cotton factories. I went through the establishment of the Soychee Cotton Spinning company today. It lies on the Whampoa river, the branch of the Yangtse which gives Shanghai access to the sea, and it is so situated that the bales can be landed right at the mills and the goods shipped thousands of miles into the interior by means of the rivers, or to Japan or the United States. The suburb connected with it is known as Hongkew. This is a great factory center, and its smokestacks dot the stream, running along its banks to the Yangtse.

Child Labor at 4 Cents Per Day.

The buildings of the Soy Chee company cover several acres. They are of gray brick and are shadowed by a smokestack which rises to the height of a twelve-story flat. Entering them, I found over 1,000 men, women and children at work. I went through room after room filled with girls who were weaving and spinning, and I saw 200 children tending the machines. Some of them were little tots not higher than my waist and many did not reach to my shoulders. The smaller children were pulling baskets filled with bobbins here and there about the rooms. The larger ones were tending the spinning mules and all were working so hard that they scarcely looked up as I entered.

I asked as to their wages, and found that they were about 4 of our cents per day, and that the pay to the older hands ranged from that to 20 cents. Think of working ten hours for 4 cents, and that in the dust of a spinning mill. I photographed some of the children, frightening the little ones almost to death as I did so. The manager tells me that he has many whole families employed in his factory—father, mother and children all working. There are no laws against child labor, and the babies aid in keeping the wolf from the door.

Speaking of babies, there were several of these in the mill. Some were still at the breast, and their mothers had brought them along that they might not lose work. I remember one girl of 18 years spinning away with an almond-eyed infant at her knees, and another had a baby in a basket beside her. The child was quiet. As I chucked it under the chin two yellow dimples broke out in its cheeks, and it smiled. In another place I saw a 3-months-old baby lying in a pile of white cotton waste on the floor of the mill.

Cotton Yarn for Hand Looms.

This factory works day and night, and there are quite as many children employed in the night shift as in the daytime. One thousand hands are always busy Sunday and week days, all the year through. Its chief product is cotton yarn for the domestic weavers. This is made up into bundles, which are then packed into bales of 400 pounds each, and shipped all over the country. The yarn is woven into cloth on hand looms, and it supplies a large part of the clothing of the common people. It comes into competition with the mills of India and Japan, and also with those which are now starting up in the other parts of China. I am told there are something like 300,000 spindles now working upon such yarn at Shanghai, and also a large number at Ningpo and Soochow. There is one big mill at Hangchow, one at Canton, and some at Hongkong, Wuchang and Hankow. The labor is abundant and the people easily learn to handle the modern machinery.

New Milling Machinery.

The Chinese are rapidly introducing the better class of machines, and their mills are already about as well equipped as our own. A great part of their machinery is imported from England, and only certain specialties come from the United States. In one factory I found an American light plant with 8,000 electric lamps burning, and in another there were modern fire machines, and the employers had a fire drill every day. In nearly every place the wages were as low or lower than those I have quoted, the highest price paid the men being something like 30 cents per day, while a good average wage was 8 or 10 cents. I found girls at work in all of the factories, and I know of none which does not employ children.

At present a considerable portion of the cotton used in China is imported from abroad. We have the bulk of the Manchurian trade, although Japan is doing its best to compete. The English sell the greater part of the goods brought in to the Yangtse valley and south China, and the Germans are pushing their cloths everywhere. Within the last year or so, however, the Chinese officials have been starting small factories in which hand looms are used. I saw some in Tientsin and other parts of Chihli, and I am told that there are more than 15,000 such looms now at work in that province.

China's Cotton Supply.

China is doing all it can to improve its native cotton. The officials are sending out men to study our cotton belt and our methods of cotton raising, and edicts have been issued to encourage the growth of the crop in all the provinces. It is claimed that cotton will do well in most parts of China. Much of the country lies in the latitude of our southern states, and from Shanghai northward there are rich plains which the experts say are fitted for cotton growing. With unscientific methods of cultivation the country is now producing something like 70 per cent of the raw material it uses, and if properly farmed, the crop could be enormously increased.

This native cotton is of a short staple. It is brought here in boats upon the Yangtse Kiang and its tributaries, and also in seagoing junks from Ningpo and the lands farther south. It is put up in bags of enormous size, but so loosely packed that one twice as large as a feather bed weighs only 200 pounds. It is loaded and unloaded by coolies, who carry it upon their heads from the ships to the factory.

Other farmers ship their raw cotton in basket-work bales the size of a hogshead. The bales are opened in the cotton yards and the lint is sometimes rebaled in packages of 500 pounds for export to the United States and Europe. The nature of the native cotton makes it especially good for underwear, and some of it is sent to the United States for that purpose.

Nation in Cotton.

Our cotton factories should send their agents here to study the market. These people dress in cotton instead of silk, and the most of the cloth used is spun and reeled by hand and woven at home. With the new civilization wages will rise and the Chinese will wear more cotton than ever before. At present it is safe to say that there are at least 400,000,000 of them who dress in such goods all the year round. They wear only one or two thin garments in the summer, but in winter they have several suits well wadded to keep themselves warm, and in the northern provinces they put on suit after suit as the weather grows colder. Indeed, some fleshy Chinese in full winter dress have trouble in getting through their own doorways. But even at one suit of twenty yards to each person per year the amount of cotton used is so great that at least 8,000,000,000 yards are required. This amount is beyond comprehension. It would carpet a pathway sixty feet wide from the earth to the moon, or cover one more than twenty miles wide from New York to Chicago. Our total shipments of cotton goods to other countries is less than $33,000,000 a year, and all we send to Asia sells for less than $3,000,000. That which goes to China would hardly patch the knees of the celestials, let alone make their clothes.

How American Oil Lights China.

If our cotton interests could handle this market as the Standard Oil does, the exports from our southern states might run into the hundreds of millions a year. The Standard Oil company has its own agents in all the provinces, and it is pushing its business in every city. Twenty years ago the oil was shipped here in tin cans. It is now brought in tank steamers which carry 10,000 tons at a load. The vessels start from San Francisco and land at half a dozen different ports, where the oil is pumped out into great storage tanks. I found such tanks at Hankow, 600 miles up the Yangtse Kiang, and saw the steamers unloaded by means of a pump. The tanks there hold tens of thousands of barrels. They have factories connected with them, where the tin plate is made into five-gallon cans. These are filled with oil and are distributed by the Yangtse and its tributaries. The stuff is economically handled, being sold in smaller and smaller packages as it gets farther away from the ports, and in some places almost by the spoonful. The Standard Oil company has tanks at Tientsin and Hongkong. It does by far the biggest oil business in China, although the Burmese, Russian and Sumatra companies compete.

Within the last year one of these latter companies has opened up a new oil territory about 200 miles north of Peking. The oil is carried in cans on wheelbarrows over 100 miles to a canal and thence floated down to the capital. The wheelbarrow men go in caravans of fifty barrows each. They are paid something like 4 cents gold a day and other labor is proportionately cheap.

Our Tobacco Trust.

Another American institution which is doing a big business in China is the Tobacco Trust. It has its agents in all of the cities, and has established several big factories. There is one at Shanghai which employs 2,000 girls in making and packing cigarettes. There is another at Mukden, and a third at Hankow. Indeed, the Americans are changing the Chinese from pipe smokers to cigarette smokers, and machine made cigarettes are now to be bought as far west as Thibet. The business is done under the name of the British-American Tobacco company, and it has in its employ both British and American officers. The chief manager is an American, who lives here at Shanghai. He tells me the Chinese are a nation of tobacco smokers, and that they have been raising and using tobacco for over 300 years. The weed was introduced from Manila less than fifty years after Columbus discovered America, and it has been in use ever since, although many of the Chinese emperors have repeatedly tried to wipe it out. Much tobacco is still smoked in pipes, two kinds of which are in use everywhere. One of these is a dry pipe, which may be of bamboo or clay or wood. Its bowl is small and seldom holds more than a pinch of tobacco. The other pipe is a metal box filled with water, through which the smoke is drawn before it enters the mouth. It has a tube about a foot long, and this bends over at the mouthpiece. This pipe is usually made of copper and silver, or an alloy of copper, zinc, nickel and iron. It is used by both men and women.

The natives make cigarettes of corn husks and bamboo leaves. They also roll tobacco in brown paper. Of late years, however, the rice paper cigarette has come into vogue, and it is used more and more every day by both men, women and children.

Strike of Tobacco Girls.

One of the Americans employed in the tobacco factory at Shanghai tells me they had a big strike the other day. A thousand-odd girls left the establishment and refused to return until their grievance was from a coffin.

The girls were in the habit of changing from one department to another without asking the manager and they looked so much alike that the foreign officials could not tell if they were in their right places. Thereupon a system of badges was instituted, giving to each girl a pin labeled with characters indicating the name of the department to which she belonged. Every girl had to have her own badge and wear it. The badges were round, square or shaped like a keystone, according to the rooms in which the girls worked. It was the last badge which caused the trouble. The day after the order went forth the girls with the keystone pins struck and the next noon the others went out. It was afterward found that the objection lay in a superstition that the keystone badges would bring bad luck to their wearers, because they were shaped like the head of a coffin. It was some time before this could be remedied and the employes brought into line.

Boycotting the British.

And this brings me to the new boycott which was recently instituted against the British steamers on the Yangtse-Kiang. I am told that some of the companies are losing a thousand dollars a day and that the Chinese are refusing to ship by them because a certain deck passenger died from a kick given by one of the steamship ticket collectors. The British are much alarmed about the matter and are doing all they can to appease the Chinese.

The first great boycott against foreigners was that imposed upon the Americans, two or three years ago. The merchants of the largest cities then bound themselves not to buy American goods and imposed a penalty of $40,000 upon any member of their organization who did so. After this boycott was raised the trouble with the Japanese caused by the importation of arms on the Tatsu Maru was instituted and it was continued until it cost Japan many millions of dollars. Not so many months ago a Chinese official told me that the damages to Japanese trade had already aggregated more than forty millions, and that the guilds of Canton had sworn to make them $150,000,000 before they got through. That boycott was most powerful at Canton. The people there would use nothing Japanese. The women had anti-Japan clubs and the merchants refused to ship in Japanese steamers. The loss of trade created financial distress all over Japan and the government officials at Tokio were at a loss as to how to handle the situation. Said one of them to me:

"We cannot fight the Chinese because they will not trade with us. The powers would not stand for a war of that kind, and we are practically helpless. This is so because the United States knuckled down and permitted the first boycott. Had she acted otherwise she might have stopped Chinese boycotting forever."

"But how could she do that?"

"Easy enough then, although not at all now with the precedent established. I was in Peking at the time the boycott was started, and I told your minister, Mr. Rockhill, how he could stop it. Said I:

"'What your government should do is to make a firm stand against the boycott, and at the same time send a gunboat or so along the coast under pretense of surveying the waters. The ships should stop at the islands, and now and then make an expedition off through the country. The Chinese will become alarmed, but the naval officers can tell them that they are merely surveying for science, adding at the end of each reply a significant question as to what China intends to do as to the boycott. The government will fear that the United States is about to retaliate and an edict will be sent forth that the boycott must be stopped.'"

"And what did Mr. Rockhill say to that?" I asked.

"'Oh,' replied the Tokio statesman, 'he had not enough backbone to try it. He said he had no doubt but that the plan would work, but that he did not dare to suggest it. When I asked why not, he significantly said: 'I don't dare to do it. I don't dare. Our Teddy would jump at it in a minute.'

"And," concluded this man, "I have no doubt but that President Roosevelt would have jumped at it; had he done so there would have been no further trouble as to American goods and none as to other foreign goods in the future. As it is, the psychological moment has passed, and not you, only, but also we and all others must go down on our knees to these boycotting celestials."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Short and Pointed Tales of Real Life Gathered from Many Sources

A Food Faddist's Fix.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, Jr., was congratulated in his office recently on the fact that he, like the poet Maeterlinck and other famous men, has taken to the motorcycle.

"And has motorcycling benefited your health?" his congratulator, a journalist ventured to ask.

"I think it has," Mr. Rockefeller replied. "I won't ask you, though, to take note of my clear eye and good color, or I might find myself in the food faddist's fix.

"A food faddist was lecturing to a large audience on the marvelous results to be obtained from chewing soup, or eating nut butter, or something of that kind. He was not a very imposing person physically; but, swelling out his chest, he slapped it thrice with the palm and cried:

"'Friends, two years ago I was a walking skeleton, a haggard, miserable wreck. Now, what do you suppose brought about this great change in me?'

"He paused to let his words sink in, and a voice asked:

"'What change?'"—St. Louis Globe Democrat.

Helping the Minister.

A Scotch preacher had in his congregation an old woman who was deaf. In order to hear the sermon each Sunday, this old lady would seat herself at the foot of the pulpit stairs. One day the sermon was about Jonah, and the preacher became very rhetorical.

"And when the sailors threw Jonah overboard," he said, "a big fish swallowed him up. Was it a shark that got 'im? Nay, my brethern, it was ne'er a shark. Was it a swordfish that eat him? Nay—"

"It was a whale," whispered the old lady excitedly.

"Hush, Biddie," said the preacher indignantly. "Would ye tak th' word of God out o' yer ane meenister's mouth?"—Success Magazine.

Some Ways of Wrongdoers.

"There are a few places where the professional crook operates," said Seymour Beutler of New York, for twenty-five years chief of the Pinkerton forces on the New York race courses, at the Willard.

"Pickpockets generally work in crowds, or bands, and many clever jobs are done while helping an old man or woman on a car. Of course, these crooks frequent crowds, and, in the case of 'prop-getters,' for instance, the thief will use a handkerchief in front of a man's scarf and with the other deftly lift out his pin. I remember one incident when two of these 'prop-getters' were working together. One of them spied a beautiful stone in a scarf of a prosperous looking passenger who was standing in a crowd on a street car. He tipped off his partner and signaled that he was going after the stone, when the latter held him back, saying, 'Nix, on that; nothing doing.'

"'Why, what's the matter; it isn't a phony,' returned the crook.

"'No, it's all right, but there must be honor among thieves.'

"The man who was about to be touched was one of the most notorious pickpockets in New York.

"On one occasion at the Saratoga race course a big storm came up and several persons were injured in the grandstand," continued Mr. Beutler. "Bob Pinkerton was one of the first to go to the aid of the injured. He found a woman who had been hurt by a flying chair, and as he stooped to take her arm he found that another man was assisting her also. He looked at his co-worker, who said: 'Well, Bob, I never thought you and I would work together.'

"It was 'Red Leary,' the bank burglar."—Washington Post.

Working the Boy.

Jerome S. McWade, the well-known Duluth connoisseur, said of the management of children in a recent Sunday school address:

"Diplomacy succeeds best with the little ones. A lad of 9 years came, all puffing and rosy, in out of the cold the other night and said:

"'Pa, I'm tired. I've sawed enough wood for this evening, ain't I? I'm awful tired.'

"'Tired? cried the father, looking up from his paper with an air of surprise and disappointment. 'Why, I bet your mother a quarter you'd have the whole pile done before supper.'

"'Did you?' shouted the boy, taking up his hat and mittens again. 'Well, you'll win your money if the saw holds out. Nobody ever bet on me and lost!'

"And he rushed back to his hard task again, his eyes flaming with enthusiasm."

A Full Stomach Verdict.

Warden McClaughry of the federal penitentiary tells a story of the first time that he served on a jury.

"It was back in 1864," he said recently, telling of the incident to a friend. "I had just come home on a furlough from the army and it was the night before Christmas, a cold, bitter night. A school teacher out in the country, where the snow was inches and inches deep, was to be tried for whipping a boy student. There were six of us impaneled and all rode out together in a big sleigh to the home of the justice of the peace where the trial was to be held. After a vigorous lecture from the honorable justice and a good deal of testimony on both sides, we were asked to adjourn to the kitchen, the room next to where the trial was being held, to deliberate on our verdict. As I said, it was the night before Christmas, and the kitchen was full of good things that go to make up a real good old-fashioned dinner.

"We organized at once to do justice to that fine line of provender. A 'serving committee' was appointed and I was made a member of it. We served all right. For three-quarters of an hour we did glorious justice to that food. Finally we had disposed of everything in sight.

"Then we returned to the court room immediately and with solemn faces announced that the verdict was that the boy had not been whipped enough."—Kansas City Journal.

The Way of Most Folks.

Henry Arthur Jones, the noted English playwright, was giving the students of Yale an address on the drama.

"Your American vernacular is picturesque," he said, "and it should help your playwrights to build strong, racy plays; but neither vernacular nor anything else is of moment if perseverance is lacking.

"No playwright can succeed who is like a man I know. I said to the man one New Year's day:

"'Doyou keep a diary, Philip?'

"'Yes,' he answered. 'I've kept one for the first two weeks in January for the last seven years.'"—Indianapolis Star.

The Supreme Test.

An Indianapolis toy dealer tells an amusing story about Booth Tarkington.

"Mr. Tarkington," he begins, "came into my shop one day at Christmas time, and said:

"'I want a Noah's ark, please. Not one of your modern Noah's ark, but a good, old-fashioned one—one wherein Noah is the same size as the elephant.'

"'I think I've got what you want, sir,' I answered, 'up in the attic.'

"And I soon brought down to him a dusty old Noah's ark of the kind that I had sold when he was a little boy in a bib.

"Mr. Tarkington opened the lid, peered in, and said:

"'Aha, this is the ticket. There they all are. There is Noah, the same size as the dove, and the dove is the same size as the elephant. But to make sure that this is a genuine old-fashioned Noah's ark I will apply one last test. I will, sir, with your permission, taste Noah's head.'

"And Mr. Tarkington laughed, pretended to taste the bright paint on the head of the patriarch, and, paying his bill, walked out with the old-fashioned Noah's ark under his arm."—Indianapolis News.

Reflected Glory.

Mr. Jones was an excellent man, prosperous in his business and modest in his ways, but not distinguished for anything in particular. His wife, however, Mrs. Smith-Jones, was a woman of rare accomplishments. She was an artist of more than ordinary ability, a brilliant pianist, and possessed a voice of remarkable sweetness and power.

At a large party one evening, at which she and her husband were present, her singing captivated a stranger who was one of the guests, and he asked to be introduced to her. His request was granted. After a few minutes' conversation the hostess came and took him away.

"You mustn't monopolize her, Mr. Simmons," she said. "I want you to meet Mr. Jones."

"Who is Mr. Jones?"

"He is her husband."

"What is he noted for?"

"Noted for?" echoes the hostess, "Why, for—for his wife."—Tit-Bits.

Twain Turned the Tables.

Mark Twain, when he worked in Nevada, on the Virginia City Enterprise, inserted in the news a good many boarding house jokes.

In revenge, the humorist's sensitive fellow boarders in Virginia City decided to put up a game on him. They enlisted the landlady's help, and at the Thanksgiving dinner at the boarding house Mark Twain, by a dextrous piece of sleight-of-hand, was served, apparently direct from the fowl, with a turkey leg of painted wood.

"You've changed your poultry dealer, haven't you, ma'am?"

"Why, no, Mr. Clemens. What makes you think so?"

"This turkey," he answered, giving the wooden drumstick a little whack with his knife; "it's about the tenderest morsel I've struck in this house for some months."—Detroit Free Press.

Suppose.

A friend of the late Father Tabb of Ellicott City, Ind., said:

"This fine poet and good man thought that class hatred was due to ignorance—that the rich knew too little of the poor, and vice versa.

"He once illustrated this ignorance with the story of a Methodist bishop's wife who addressed a meeting of slum housewives on their home duties. The address made the home life seem all very fine and ideal, but one housewife voiced the opinion of the rest, perhaps, when she said to her neighbors with a sniff:

"'She's all right as far as she goes; but what I'd like to ask her is this—what does she do when her old bishop comes home on pay night with his envelope empty and a fightin' jag on?'"

The Chief Requisite.

Richard Watson Gilder had a dry wit of his own. He once received a call from a young woman who wished to secure material for an article of 3,000 words on "Young Women in Literature."

"It was a fetching subject, full of meat," explained the young woman afterward, "and I saw not only 3,000 words in the story, but at least 6,000. But I never got any further than the first question. Mr. Gilder's answer took the very life out of me. I asked him: 'Now, Mr. Gilder, what would you say was the first, the chief, the all-essential requisite for a young woman entering the literary field?'

"I waited with bated breath, when he answered: 'Postage stamps.'"—Boston Globe.

Some Duties of Ambassadors.

Senator Tillman at a Washington dinner party was talking about the duties of an ambassador:

"They are important duties," said he. "A really good ambassador should know all about the country he is sent to. Then he wouldn't make the mistake committed by an American in Afghanistan.

"This American entertained the shahzada for three days, giving him a very handsome suite of rooms in his house.

"The morning of the shahzada's arrival the American host visited him in his apartment and was amazed to see the royal guest and his entire staff hopping about the floor in the oddest way. They conversed politely and gravely, but instead of walking they hopped, taking great leaps of eight or nine feet.

"The host ventured to ask the reason of his hopping. The shahzada politely replied:

"'You see, this carpet is green, with white roses here and there. Green is a sacred color with us, so we are obliged to hop from rose to rose. It is good exercise, but rather fatiguing, I confess.'"—Philadelphia Record.

South Dakota's New Capitol Building

WHILE it will be midsummer before the last of the workmen are out of the new capitol of South Dakota at Pierre, many of the state officials will be located in their new quarters before the final finishing is put upon interior work in some parts of the building. In fact the officials expect to begin moving into the building by the first of March, and the city, which has purchased the old building, has orders to get it off the grounds in April, as it is expected that everything will be moved out by that time.

The work yet to be done is the completion of the marble finishings, the final closing up of the interior decorations and a small amount of carpenter work. W. G. Andrews, the contractor on the decoration work, says he is fully 75 per cent done with that part of the work and can complete all but the mural work in a little over thirty days. Mr. Andrews has just returned from a trip east, in which he found the mural work, which is being done by E. H. Blashfield and Edward Simmons, both of New York, and Charles Holloway of Chicago, is well along, and he thinks he can have all the paintings in place before the first of June, but this work will not in the least delay the occupancy of the building. The marble work is well along, all the pillars being placed, most of the wainscoting being in place and the placing of balusters and stair treads now being pushed along.

On account of the demand for room the commission has added a large amount of space for storage in the basement by having the whole of the basement floor concreted, making large amount of storage room.

The work on the grounds is also being pushed, but with the present appropriation at the command of the commission about all which can be done in that way is in the grading and leveling. The commission has begun the preliminary steps toward securing a number of lots along the eastern end of the grounds by condemnation to give the required space for the lake to be located on the east end of the grounds.

Contractor Olsen has pushed work from the start and will be ready to turn over a completed building to the commission under the contract time regardless of the fact that numerous changes which would extend his time have been asked for in the progress of the work. The people are getting a fine building absolutely without taxation for that purpose.

NEW SOUTH DAKOTA CAPITOL BUILDING AT PIERRE.