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## A Bank for "Hoodoos"

THE British aristocracy and wealthy classes have been driven by terror or superstition to confide many seemingly haunted heirlooms and valuable objects of art to the public museums.

There must be some Americans in a similar predicament. Mrs. Charles Gilpin, the noted society beauty of Philadelphia, is the possessor of a singularly beautiful emerald which she says has brought her domestic misfortune and persistent ill-luck. So afraid is she of the emerald that she never wears it, and no one can find out what has become of it.

She might get rid of her troubles in the British way by turning her emerald over to some respectable museum. She has not the superstition-defying courage of Mrs. Edward McLean, who has bought, and is wearing, the beautiful Hope diamond which has the most amazing history of tragedy and ill-luck ever associated with a lifeless object.

Very strange behavior on the part of idols and images in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has called attention to the practice among the British aristocracy of "banking their hoodoos" in a museum.

Watchmen left to guard the museum at night have heard blood-curdling groans, unearthly cries, noises suggestive of the pattering

had obtained it in Lower Burma. The captain took the object by "strategy" from a Buddhist temple and being interrupted by the priest killed the poor fellow.

After that the image brought ill-luck to every white man who came in contact with it. When the ship carrying it was near Liverpool a fire broke out on board. The crew, who attributed all their troubles to the Buddha, threw it overboard, and after that they reached port safely. By a rather strange accident the Buddha was washed ashore in Wales and the captain claimed it and obtained it with much difficulty and expense. Soon afterward he died.

His daughter kept the Buddha in her house for several years, during which it gave rise to continual trouble. The servants refused to stay in the house. They declared that the image wandered about the house at night and that its eyes were constantly upon them.

Then a young daughter of the owner, who had been observed gazing fixedly at the image, died. This final misfortune made Mrs. Evans decide to get rid of the ill-omened image. She presented it to the Victoria and Albert Museum, where it has been the reputed cause of many mysterious disturbances.

It is in this museum that a large part of Pierpont Morgan's collection has hitherto been housed. Report

possessed one of the most valuable collection of art antiquities in the country.

Among them was the mummy case of Nes-Amun, a magnificent representation of the dead priest, whose body it once contained, in red, green, black and gold upon wood. It was presented to Lady Meux by Walter Ingram, a noted traveler. He was killed in an elephant hunt shortly after making the gift. The case bears an inscription stating that a curse will fall upon him who removes it from its resting place.

Lady Meux, who was a vigorous character, defied the curse, and certainly it did not prevent her from living to an advanced age. But she became estranged from all her friends. She quarrelled violently with Whistler.

She quarrelled as savagely with her husband's relatives. She had no children and thus she had the bitterness of knowing that her treasures must go to her husband's hated relatives or pass into the hands of strangers.

She left the bulk of her property, including the mummy case of Nes-Amun, to Admiral Sir Hedworth Lambton, a brother of the Earl of Durham. The Admiral is distinguished for having saved the British

objects, may bring upon themselves the troubles which they fear. This theory would account for some of the tragedies associated with the Hope diamond.

Another prominent British hoodoo is the mummy case of the Egyptian high priest Nes-Amun, which belonged to the wealthy and eccentric Lady Meux. The original discoverer of the artist Whistler, the widow of a wealthy baronet, she



PHOTO BY ELIAS PHILA.



Madame Catulle Mendes's sitting Buddha that sways her life.



Ancient Flemish ewer in Pierpont Morgan's collection said to have unearthly noises.

Mrs. Charles Gilpin, of Philadelphia, who is afraid to wear her splendid "hoodoo" emerald.

of ghostly feet. Many of the keepers having certain antiquities in their care have suffered serious illness and other misfortunes.

Investigation has shown that there are really in the museum many objects which have had a tragic and ill-omened history. Among them is a carved teak-wood image of Buddha, which belonged, until recently, to a Mrs. Evans, whose father, a sea captain,

says that a curious sixteenth century Flemish copper ewer in the form of a human head, belonging to Mr. Morgan, has been heard uttering unearthly groans at night.

Not all antique idols and images are credited with bringing misfortune. Madame Catulle Mendes, the noted Parisian novelist, possesses a strange little ivory Buddha which she consults before embarking on any new undertaking. She says

that when she is acting according to the Buddha's direction she never fails to enjoy good fortune. Scientific psychologists tell us that there may be a basis of fact in the yarns associated with these idols and images.

The inanimate objects themselves can have no power over human beings or events, but it is possible that superstitious persons, believing in the supernatural powers attributed to the

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## Very Odd "Behavior" of Idols and Images in the British Museum Reveals the Fact That Superstitious Aristocrats Turn Their "Haunted Heirlooms" Over to the Public Care

Garrison at Ladysmith during the Boer War by taking his naval guns into the besieged town at the critical moment. He is considered one of the bravest men in the British navy. But he was not brave enough to keep the mummy case of the Egyptian high priest and he turned it over to the museum.

Another object in the museum seemingly possessed of supernatural qualities is a bambino, or holy child, lying on a miniature four-post bed hung with Neapolitan and Burmese charms. It originally belonged to Lady Nevill, whose sons complained that a constant series of misfortunes pursued them. They therefore turned the handsome and valuable relic over to the museum. Presumably in this case the misfortunes had been happened because a holy relic had been removed from its proper resting place in a church.

Even before the recent alleged activity of the haunted objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum all England was excited by the strange behavior of the mummy case of the priestess of Amen-Ra.

This priestess, Hetare by name, belonged to the royal family of Egypt. In early life she was ordained a priestess of Amen-Ra, but on the accession of her brother as Pharaoh Amen-hotep IV., she followed the new religion to which he belonged and left the temple of Amen-Ra. Thus she may have incurred the wrath of the ancient gods.

A party of four young Englishmen secured her mummy in its case some thirty years ago. Before they left Egypt the mummy was stolen and subsequent misfortunes followed the case. One of the young men was crippled in Egypt and another was shot shortly after reaching England. A third died suddenly and the fourth followed him after losing his large fortune. The sister of the last hastily presented the mummy case to the mu-



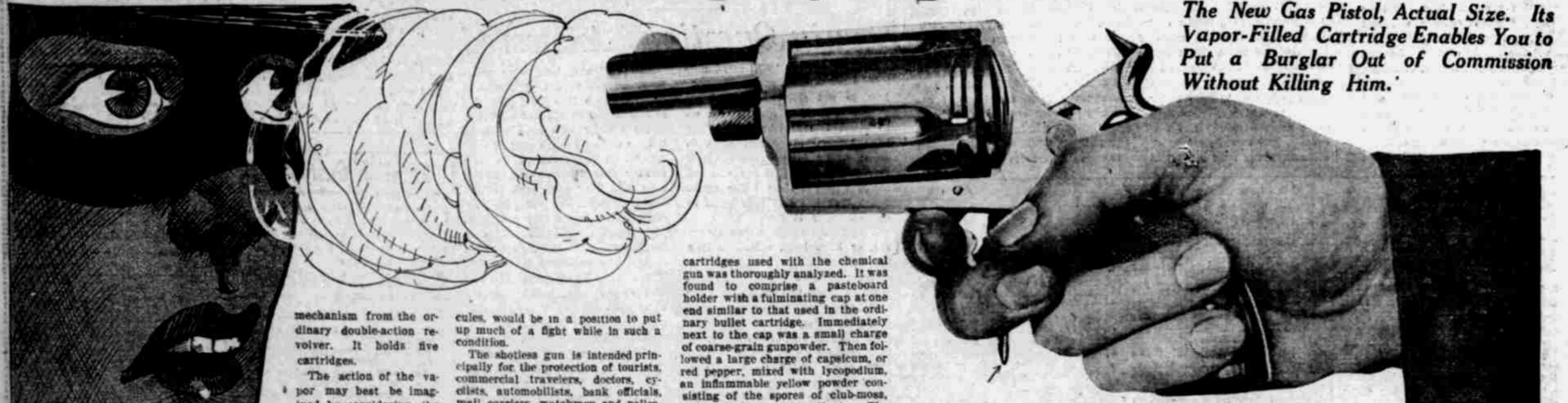
Mummy case with extraordinarily tragic history, that belonged to the late Lady Meux

seum. The man who drove it there died within a week, while one who helped to carry it into the building soon afterward had both legs cut off in a railroad accident.

The first man who attempted to photograph the mummy case fell, smashed his camera and cut his face severely. The first journalist who described the tragedies accompanying the object died soon afterward.

The daughter of the Marchioness of Salisbury, who went to look at the notorious object, fell and sprained her ankle. Other more serious accidents followed and finally the authorities withdrew the case from public view on account of the reign of terror and excitement it had created.

## A Pistol That Shoots Stupefying Gas Here Is the Secret Service's Newest Weapon Against the Evil-Doer



THE bulletless gun has at last made its appearance. It is a German invention and, instead of bullets, it shoots a gas which temporarily blinds and chokes the victim.

The action of the vapor may best be imagined by considering the position of the person shot at. The appearance of the weapon, the report and the flare of the powder combine to convince the victim that he has been shot at with an ordinary firearm. His eyes and mouth open in surprise and the gases generated by the combination of the chemicals envelop his head completely, penetrating his eyes and affecting his sight.

For several minutes he is practically blind. Simultaneously the mucous membranes of the nose and throat are irritated and the victim sneezes and chokes. For a minute or two the victim finds it almost impossible to breathe.

At the laboratories of Bendler & Schlesinger, at Third avenue and Tenth street, New York, one of the cartridges used with the chemical gun was thoroughly analyzed. It was found to comprise a pasteboard holder with a fulminating cap at one end similar to that used in the ordinary bullet cartridge. Immediately next to the cap was a small charge of coarse-grain gunpowder. Then followed a large charge of capsicum, or red pepper, mixed with lycopodium, an inflammable yellow powder consisting of the spores of club-moss, and a slight trace of saltpetre. The remainder of the holder was filled with lycopodium.

With the pulling of the trigger, the cap explodes the gunpowder and the force of the explosion unites the red pepper and lycopodium and produces the blinding, suffocating vapor upon which the principle of the weapon depends.

To test the effect of this cartridge, Mr. Schlesinger procured a guinea-pig from his laboratory and discharged it at the animal at a range of some three feet. The guinea-pig seemed to suffer no pain, but was unable to open its eyes for the space of a minute and seemed to have some difficulty in breathing as the fumes penetrated its nose and throat.

The test, however, hardly did justice to the weapon, for, naturally enough, the guinea-pig was not in the least alarmed at the sudden sight of the gun as a human being would be and kept his mouth shut and his eyes nearly so. With a human being, of course, the surprise and shock would operate to open the victim's eyes, and mouth and give the fumes a better chance to work.

The cartridge used contains several ingredients which, when exploded, combine to form a vapor of a peculiar character. The gun itself differs very little in appearance and

mechanism from the ordinary double-action revolver. It holds five cartridges.

Chief William J. Flynn, of the United States Secret Service, has decided to adopt this weapon for use in the service. In rounding up bands of counterfeiters and other offenders against the Federal laws, the Chief believes the chemical gun will prove just as effective and, at the same time, more humane than the ordinary weapon, which frequently inflicts serious injury and sometimes kills the prisoner. Overpowered by the fumes of this new gun, any criminal, however dangerous, may be readily captured and by the time the effects of the vapor have worn off the prisoner is safely manacled.

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"Several times in my experience," said Chief Flynn, "I have wished for just such a weapon as this chemical gun. In dealing with Black Handers, counterfeiters and other criminals who usually operate in bands, it is almost always necessary to round them up at the point of a gun.

"The raiding officers are then in a position where for the preservation of their own lives they must show that they are determined to shoot and to shoot to kill at the first show of resistance. The first suspicious movement upon the part of the prisoners is the signal for the officers to fire, and yet they are naturally loath to take human life unless it is absolutely necessary.

"This chemical gun, I believe, solves the difficulty. If a prisoner shows fight, he finds himself suddenly confronted with what he imagines is a loaded revolver. In nine cases out of ten, it is sufficient to take all the fight out of him, he throws up his hands and gives in. In the tenth case, perhaps, he is either too frightened to think of his danger or too desperate not to take a chance and he springs at the officer right in the muzzle of the gun.