

BAREFOOT IN FIERY LAVA

THE HORRIBLE SUFFERINGS OF HINDOO FANATICS.

Walking on a Bed of Live Coals—Men, Women and Children. Even. Treat the Fire, Walk to Music and Frenzied Songs and Supplications—The Government Should Interfere.

Blasts of trumpets, ringing of bells, the sounding of innumerable tom-toms, ecstatic ravings from ten thousand throats, all simultaneously and executed with all possible fervor—these are the preliminaries of the gruesome spectacle known as the fire-walk of the Hindus, which took place at Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, recently described by Eugene Wolf in a foreign periodical.

"I had stayed expressly to see it," he writes, "being persuaded to do so by the glaring advertisements of the railroad companies that ran special excursions to Pitrebooth Mountain, at the southern slope of which the lava was to be spread. It's a humbug, of course, I said to myself. The genuine fire-walk has long been abandoned. They will give us a fake show with the aid of Chinese fire. These clever Hindus and the English company which presented them with steam cars, as usual, will reap the benefit.

"But thoughts of the unreality of the thing vanished quickly as I neared the roped arena of fanaticism. The race-course strewn with live coals and separated from the highway by stout ropes is twenty-one feet broad from the entrance to the embankment of the rivulet where the priests are stationed, with their pots of ointment and healing salves. As I approached the tribune, the caretakers had just finished the work of spreading the red glowing charcoals over every inch of the allotted ground, for in order that the sacrifice be complete there must be no break in the chain of self-inflicted horrors.

"The charcoal had been obtained by charring an immense pile of wood and distributing its contents, while yet ablaze, over the track on the mountainside, the firemen being Hindu priests and adepts. Now they drew up in front of the scaffold, where I, with others, was putting civilization to shame, and viewed their work. The imaginary road to heaven they had built was one mass of red fire, that swayed to and fro with the vibration of its own heat. The priests contemplated the horizontal pyre with satisfied looks, paying no attention to the burns received in the work. Three or four of the old men had lost their sandals in preparing the lava bed. The hair, eyebrows and beards of all were singed or partially burned off.

TERRIBLE LAVA HEAT.

"The heat of the atmosphere was terrible and, combined with that emanating from the fiery road, almost unbearable. I wore an Indian tunic consisting of two thick felt hats, one spread over the other, and in addition guarded my eyes by a sunshade doubly lined, but notwithstanding, my head burned as with fever, while tears rolled from my eyes incessantly. There I sat a prisoner, not two feet from the lava bed, held captive on the other side by a surging mass of 10,000 sightseers, who grew more excited every second while, at the same time, their ranks were swelled by newcomers on ox carts, mules, on foot and by rail.

"Aside from myself and two other Europeans no one in the vast crowd seemed to mind the poisonous vapors arising over the lava; they got into my lungs and soon caused nose-bleeding and intense pain in the head and eyes. Yet I had to sit still and await the horrible ceremonies which the railroads had advertised circus fashion and which, for that very reason, I had thought to be a chimera of the past brought back to unreal life for money-getting purposes.

FESTIVE MUSIC AND DANCES.

"Alas, there is the procession formed before my eyes by subjects of Her British Majesty. First a gang of a half hundred urchins of both sexes, naked but for the flowers in their hair. They sing and dance, filling the air with exclamations of joy and agile arms and legs. Then follow the music, kettle drums, gongs, clappers and castanets, the orchestra dividing upon arriving at the show place and taking positions on both sides of the lava bed, half a dozen of them being kind enough to place themselves between me and the fiery oven.

"Surprise upon surprise! The white helmet of a dozen police officers under a lieutenant appear marching at the head of the natives. Two are left to guard the tribune for distinguished foreigners, the rest from a cordon alongside the lava bed, 'to maintain discipline,' as the lieutenant expressed it.

WALKING ON THE FIRE.

"The Hindus! One hundred men wearing only a thin linen cloth about their loins, the long, black hair loosened and falling upon the shoulders, garlands of flowers and greens around the forehead, neck and breast. In both hands they carried large flowers pieces, holding them aloft as offerings to Heaven. Their eyes are fixed upon the sinking sun, they walked slowly and deliberately in single file, one after the other, paying no attention to their surroundings.

"If my eyes have not betrayed me the majority of the fire walkers were half unconscious with pain upon reaching the embankment. They had to be dragged down into the slimy water, where their feet were bathed and treated to a coat of ointment. After a little while they seemed to have momentarily recovered, only to become subject to another fit of religious delirium.

"Nirvana they call it, a condition which, according to the Buddhist doctrine, presupposes the total extinction of desire, passion and unrest, a state to which the professors of Buddhism aspire as the highest aim of life.

"Nirvana, they cry, 'Nirvana,' and though hardly able to use their feet, these unfortunates drag themselves back to the entrance of the lava bed singing and shouting. Their appearance is sickening. From their bleeding feet and ankles hangs the flesh in shreds; their bodies are covered with blotches and dust. The mass of sightseers, however, feels no mercy; all these people adhere to the Nirvana theory, and though most of them are too cowardly to undergo the tortures themselves, their religious spirits rise at seeing others do so.

"They applaud wildly, encourage the musicians to new exertions, and bring their children and women to beg the fire walkers to make another trial for their sake. The men readily respond, for while they suffer physical pain their imagination leads them to believe they are in paradise. Twice, three times some brave the flames, two of the latter fall on their knees after walking half the distance, and for a moment I think they will roast to death. But the fanatic shouting of the onlookers makes the Hindu get up and complete the terrible task with a bound or two.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN TOO.

"Alas! poor creatures; this last performance, more horrible than the others, will not help them to achieve Nirvana. The Hindu must walk slowly and deliberately through the fire, says the book of Buddha.

"The mob grows more furious with passion; frenzied prayers are heard on all sides; the number of voluntary fire walkers has tripled. 'Women, children,' is the cry now.

"I see several Hindus ready to enter upon the walk and place babies on their bare shoulders. 'Lieutenant,' I shout, 'unless you hinder this sacrifice I will report you to the Governor.'

"The official and his eleven men—twelve men against 10,000—run to the entrance, and, taking each other by the hands, form a ring round the natives with the children. The mob advanced upon the group threateningly; a moment later and triumphant cries announce that the police have been pushed aside, that they have ceased to offer even a shadow of protection.

"Meanwhile the lava has cooled off somewhat; the coals, in spots, present a blackened appearance; white caps show here and there that the cinders have burned out. 'Women and children prepare for heaven!' shout the priests.

"Beautiful girls, mothers and crones, the lower part of their bodies naked, with bare breasts and flowers in hair and hands, now seek the doleful path, preceded by their fathers and brothers, carrying the children, a homogenous host of frenzied, jubilant, hopeful. After their wounds have been dressed by the priests all throng into the temple to prostrate themselves before the All-Sacred.

"This is the Tinnery festival as it was celebrated in the year of our Lord 1895 on the Christian island of Mauritius, sometimes called the Isle of France, the scene of 'Paul and Virginia.' The island has belonged to the British Empire since 1814, and before that was under French rule for some two hundred years. The British Governor is powerless to prevent such scenes of native fanaticism, having only a few hundred policemen and one battalion of the Scotch Black Watch at his disposal.

"Before I came to Mauritius I stayed a few weeks in Benares, where I witnessed hundreds of cremations of victims of typhus, cholera and consumption at the embankments of the holy river. The nude bodies were placed on a small pile of wood and the latter fired, a horrible spectacle to contemplate, horrible for all but the crocodiles waiting for the bones. But the Benares performance paled into insignificance by the side of the fire walk on the island of Mauritius.

"I travel to learn and see, but I wish to God I had never read the circus advertisements of the railroad company that caused me to witness the Tinnery festival."

DO HORSES WEEP?

A Story of a Cavalry Horse That Would Indicate They Do.

Do horses weep? is a question discussed by our contemporary, the Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette. It tells us that there is a well authenticated case of a horse weeping during the Crimean War. On the advance to the Heights of Alma a battery of artillery became exposed to the fire of a concealed Russian battery, and in the course of a few minutes it was nearly destroyed, men and horses killed and wounded, guns dismantled and limbers broken; a solitary horse, which had apparently escaped unhurt, was observed standing with fixed gaze upon an object close beside him; this turned out to be his late master, quite dead.

The poor animal, when a trooper was dispatched to recover him, was found with copious tears flowing from his eyes; and it was only by main force that he could be dragged away from the spot, and his unearthly cries to get back to his master were heartrending. Apropos of the intense love that cavalry horses have for music, a correspondent of the Gazette writes that when the Sixth Dragoons recently changed their quarters a mare belonging to one of the troopers was taken so ill as to be unable to proceed on the journey the following morning. Two days later another detachment of the same regiment, accompanied by the band, arrived. The sick mare was in a loose box, but, hearing the martial strains, kicked a hole through the side of her box, and, making her way through the shop of a tradesman, took her place in the troop before she was secured and brought back to the stable. But the excitement had proved too great, and the subsequent exhaustion proved fatal.

Man is the balance-wheel of woman.

FALL FUN.

Next door neighbor—"My new organ has twenty stops." The sufferer—"Why don't you use 'em once in a while?"

Friend—"Your son, I understand, has literary aspirations. Does he write for money?"—Father (feelingly)—"Unceasingly."

"Three minutes for dinner!" yelled the railroad porter. "Good!" exclaimed the editor. "The last time it was \$3."

"Some of the world's finest literature is out of print," remarked the bibliophile. "That's right," replied the poet, "I can't get an editor to touch my productions."

She (to waiter)—"Let me see. Have you ice cream?" Waiter—"Yes'm. How would you like a plate?" She—"Very full, thank you."

He—"I believe I will propose to her by telephone. Do you think she will accept me?" She—"She ought to if you ring her up properly."

The worst example of the "bicycle face" is that of the man who does not own a wheel himself, but keeps coming around to borrow yours.

"You say it was a runaway match?" "Partly. He tried to run away, but she brought him to time by threats of a breach of promise suit."

The wife—"Yourare a fool!" The husband—"I know it." Anybody but a fool would have known enough to accept your first rejection of my proposal as final!"

Waiter—"Will you have spinach today, sir?" (Guest—"Yes, but I don't want it so spunky as it was yesterday. Bring me some with no sand in it.")

Small Margery had just been stung by a wasp. "I wouldn't a-minded it walking all over my hand," she said, between her sobs, "if it hadn't sat down so hard."

"What became of that trifling fellow, Tweedles?" "Oh, he went west and opened a store." "Doing well?" "No; doing time. He was caught in the act."

Editor's wife—"Who wrote this beautiful article on 'How to Manage a Wife?'" Editor—"Young Quiller." Editor's wife—"Why, I didn't know he was married." Editor—"He isn't."

I press my suit to call on her. My trousers are in creases; I call on her to press my suit. And find her scorn increases.

"Are you very busy?" "No, sir. What can we do for you?" "I notice that the advertisement in the window says you have 10,000 overcoats for sale. Can I try them on?"

College freshman—"Don't you enjoy the study of astronomy?" High school girl—"Oh, it's delightful! And I do think the constellation of O'Brien is just too lovely for anything; don't you?"

Biggs—"I see Jiggs has been married. Suppose congratulations are in order?" Miggs—"Well, I don't know his bride, so I can't congratulate him, and I do know him, so I can't congratulate her."

Horse dealer—"You had better buy the horse, colonel. You will never find a healthier animal." Colonel Jones—"I believe it. If he hadn't been healthy all his life he never would have lived so long."

Little Ethel (horrified)—"We've invited too many children to our tea party. There isn't enough for them to get more than a bite each." Little Dot (resignedly)—"That's good. We'll have to call it a reception."

"You know that although a wealthy man, I never drink, smoke, gamble or swear—that I am perfectly exemplary. Then why do you refuse me?" "You certainly could not ask me to become the manager of a freak!"

"I wonder why Cupid is always represented as a little boy. A boy couldn't be such an unerring shot as Cu"—"Couldn't he be? Say, did you ever have a small boy and a catapult get a spite against one of your windows?"

"I wish we were rich, John, and could do something for the world," Mrs. B. remarked half devoutly, half impatiently. "But, my dear," he replied, "we can do good in a quiet way now." "Yes; but no one will ever hear of it."

"I have been almost a hermit," sighed the successful man. "Now that my fortune is made, and I have a little time of my own, I find it impossible to get in touch with the world." "You ought to get a bicycle," suggested his friend.

He—"This is the last season I shall own a yacht." The Unaffected One—"Why, Mr. Saylor, I thought you were perfectly in love with sailing." "So I am, but it's too much work to get my friends to go with me. They say they have to give up too much in order to do it."

Miss Coygirl—"Jack Softleigh told me last night that I ought to accept him because he was willing to prove his love for me." Her friend—"What did you say?" "I said I couldn't see it in that light." "Then what did he say?" "Nothing. He just turned the light out."

Crispi's Body Guard.

An Italian newspaper has recently published in detail the daily expense incurred by the Government in guarding King Humbert's Minister of State, which is probably the first time that unpopularity has been measured by a pecuniary standard. According to this paper Crispi's person is watched over by two commissaries of police at \$1.80 a day, twenty-two "agents" or detectives, at a little over 90 cents a day for each and two vice-brigadiers at 60 cents each (one would suppose from their titles that vice-brigadiers would cost more). A carriage at \$2.50 also figures in the bill. The total, reduced to American money, is \$26.10 per day, or \$9,526.50 per year. This, however, is only during the time when the Prime Minister is in Rome. When he travels the expenses are three or four times as great, which bring the annual amount up to about \$12,000.

Not a Bombardment.

Kissam—Has her papa ever fired you? Higgins—He has never resorted to bombardment. His tactics are more in the nature of a passive blockade. How is that? When I call to see his daughter, he remains in the parlor during the whole of the interview.

HOUSEHOLD.

Bags of All Kinds.

Clothes pin bags! Nearly everybody has one. Made out of ticking of course. A piece three-quarters of a yard long and ten inches wide doubled for twelve inches to form a sack and with strings to tie round the waist. It is much improved in looks, in case there is no place to hang it save where it will be seen, by cutting the ticking, arranging it so that only the right side shows, and working the white stripes with feather stitching in turkey red, outlining cotton.

One more. A novelty this time. We read somewhere, the other day, that a small piece of ice would keep a weak if confined in a woolen bag, enclosed within a second woolen bag a good two inches larger, the space between them being evenly filled with feathers. Such a bag would be worth having in case of sickness.

Having given so much space to the purely useful and well known members of the family I will have to limit my introductions among the ornamental as well as useful whose name is legion. Light green or blue satin combined with pink silk makes a pretty fancy-work bag. A round piece of card-board covered one side pink and one green forms the bottom. A perfectly straight piece of the satin lined with the silk gathered very full on one edge, which should be felled to the bottom and prettily shirred with a ribbon draw string at the other completes the bag. Smaller ones of the same pattern are found on gentleman's bureaus for soiled collars and cuffs, the gift of some lady friend.

A handy bag for soiled handkerchiefs is also found in a convenient place in his room. It is made of a brilliant Turkish towel sewn into a sack, the fringes pulled up through an embroidery hoop, turned down over it nearly half way, and securely fastened. Three gay bows decorate it, two where the ribbon loop, by which it is hung, are sewn to the hoop and one directly over the nail from which it hangs.

Others are only protected and ornamented at the bottom with vandykes of the crocheted rings pointing upward. If an all black hand-bag is too sombre, delicate rose-color or lavender silk gleaming through the circles of the black rings are elegant and beautiful.

Ways of Serving Peaches.

When simply sliced, to be eaten with sugar and cream, peaches should be set on ice for a short time, but never sweetened beforehand, as standing in sugar destroys their delicate flavor.

Baked peaches are nice, and this is an excellent way to use those that are not quite ripe. Pare and halve the fruit. Remove the stones and in each cavity left put a piece of butter and cover generously with sugar. Set each half peach on a round of buttered toast, sprinkle with more sugar, lemon juice and a very little nutmeg. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes and serve hot, with cream.

Peach trifle is a dainty dessert, concocted of nicely peeled and sliced peaches, 2 cups of milk, 4 tablespoonsful of sugar, 3 eggs and a small stale sponge cake. Make a boiled custard of the milk, the yolks of the eggs and half the sugar. Slice the cake, lay it in the bottom of a glass dish and cover with the peaches well sweetened. Beat the whites of the eggs, with the remaining 2 spoonfuls of sugar, to a stiff meringue and heap lightly on top. All the ingredients should be very cold before they are mixed, and the custard is poured over the "trifle" when served.

Peach roll has a rather rich suet crust rolled out in a long sheet. Cut up the peaches rather fine and spread thickly on the paste, sprinkling liberally with sugar. Roll up and fold the ends over. Then wrap in a strong cloth, tie closely and steam for two hours in a steamer. It is eaten with either a hard or soft sauce.

Cut-up peaches are a delicious addition to hard pudding sauce of butter and sugar creamed together, and transform even a plain batter pudding into a royal viand.

Peach potpie is merely a plain pie-crust filled with a deep layer of sliced peaches, then a layer of sugar and nutmeg. Cover with a crust and bake slowly for two or three hours. For preserving the best quality of peaches should be selected and they should never be either over or under-ripe. White freestones are the best. Like other large fruits, too, they should always be peeled with a silver knife and thrown immediately into cold water to prevent discoloring. When this is done divide each peach and remove the stone. In a porcelain kettle, make a syrup of 1 lb of sugar and 1 pint of water for every pound of fruit. Drop in the halves and let them boil for 20 minutes. Then dip out and lay on a large dish. Boil down the syrup until it is quite thick, when return the peaches to it and cook gently until they appear transparent. Put up in glass jars and screw on the covers securely.

Hints for Housewives.

The lighter the color on the walls of the room, the less artificial light will be required.

For greasing pans for bread and cake baking, tie a piece of muslin on the end of a stick.

When flat irons become rusty, black them with stove polish, and rub well with a dry brush.

Steel knives and forks not in daily use may be preserved from rust by keeping them in a bag of flannel or flannelette made like a glove, with a separate compartment for each knife.

Water Jugs and decanters may be cleaned by filling about two-thirds full of hot but not boiling water, in which is a number of pieces of brown paper. After letting stand for a few hours, shake well

and rinse with cold water. Turn down over a folded towel and when it has drained perfectly dry, polish outside and in as well as you can.

IMPROVING FRUITS.

The Development Which Has Taken Place in the Quality of the Common Fruits.

If there be a timely thought for the hot season it is surely that in which one recalls the almost complete revolution which the fruit trade has undergone in the last few decades. Half a century ago these succulent products of garden and orchard were almost inaccessible to the poor; to day—thanks to swift railroad transportation and the development of canning industry—they are received everywhere in abundance, and can be sold at prices low enough to meet the needs of the humblest purses.

Not less remarkable than their increase in quantity has been the improvement which has taken place in the quality of the common fruits, though this amelioration, as the naturalists tell us, is one that has been going on ever since the age in which vegetable-eating animals first appeared upon our planet.

Somewhere in what is known as the tertiary period, fruits were first developed as a means of distributing the seeds of a variety of plants. Owing to the deposit of sugary matter in the tissues, birds were led to prefer certain seeds to others; such chosen seeds were widely dispersed, and had the best chance of surviving.

GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The edible portion of the plant which we now call fruit was developed from different parts of the floral envelopes or of the ovary of the plant, the calyx becoming enlarged and fleshy, as in the apple and pear; the receptacle itself swelling to form the strawberry; the integuments of the ovary increasing in bulk, as in the case of the plum, the peach, and the grape. In other plants compound fruits arose, in a variety of ways, from a mass of flowers, as in the case of the mulberry, the pineapple and the fig.

The first of the fruits were thus brought into existence through the agency of the lower animals by what is called natural selection. But when man came he began to select and improve fruits for himself. The most primitive tribes must have exercised, in some form or other, this new kind of selection.

The progress made within historic times in the character of certain apples and pears has been remarkable, not to say extraordinary. The apple of the age of the lake-dwellings of Switzerland, for example, hardly equalled our crab-apple; while the luscious peach of to-day is believed by expert naturalists to have had at one time the low estate of a mere almond.

A purely modern feature of these improvements has been the success achieved by the fruit raiser in producing seedless varieties.

THE ABSENCE OF SEEDS

is asserted to have a double advantage, since the nutriment originally needed to develop the seed goes to increasing the supply for the fruit.

At present, the fruits in common use that have few or no seeds include bananas, pine-apples, and a certain kind of oranges, together with some other tropical fruits that do not reach the great markets of the world in large quantities. Yet cultivators do not greatly despair of adding to this list—of eliminating the small and hard seeds of the strawberry, the raspberry, the blackberry, and the currant, and of providing for the market that "long-felt want"—the seedless grape. Nor do they altogether frown on the enthusiastic fruit consumer who looks forward to a future of coreless apples and pears, of stoneless cherries and plums.

In the meantime, cultivators of fruit are much more anxious still further to improve means of transportation that to provide more luscious fruit. Should they succeed, it may prove possible even in our own time, with the help of more scientific methods of transportation, to draw to our northern markets some of those edibles that now make the sultry tropics almost a regret to the untraveled—even such delicacies as the avocado pear, the custard-apple, the cherimoyer, the sweet-cup, the sweet-sop, the durian, the papaw, the rambutan, the mango, and the mangosteen.

Complete, Electrically.

A beautiful house just completed in New York is an example of the present uses of electricity. In the basement is installed a double engine, such as are found in ocean-going steamers. This will generate electricity, which will be used for heating and illuminating the house. Electricity will do the cooking in the kitchen, which is at the top of the house. The kitchen is equipped with aluminum utensils. The engine will also operate a refrigerating or cold-air system which, in summer, will extend all over the house. Electric bells, electric dumb waiters, and electric passenger elevator and electric ventilating fans are among the novelties. The roof of the house will be arranged as a summer garden, and will be illuminated during the season.

Up-to-Date Siamese.

Every year a number of boys are sent from Siam by the King to England to learn different things. One learns upholstery, one learns typewriting, one learns languages, one learns science, and so on. When they return to Siam each takes with him some different information to impart to others.

A Morning Walk.

Stranger—Phew! what's that smell? Citizen (of average city ruled by average politicians)—Come away, quick! We are getting too near the reservoir.