

French Mother-in-Law is a Diplomat

Why, asks a writer in The London Daily Mail, is the mother-in-law a failure in England and a success in France?

"The English attitude toward her," she writes, "is aptly expressed in the hideous appellation 'mother-in-law!' Who could love a mother with the legal reminder tacked on? How much more gracious is the courtly French designation 'Belle Mere'!

"Of course, they have the mother-in-law joke in France, but it is without meaning, for Belle Mere is, far more often than not, an unmitigated success and a most welcome addition to the household. In France it is rare for the wife's mother to keep a separate establishment. Think of the expense—and how much better to share income and motor car! Thus the young menage can afford a larger house and indulge in luxuries that might otherwise be beyond their grasp.

"But Belle Mere's benevolences do not stop here. The housekeeping passes into her experienced hands and she sees to it that during the first critical months of married life the young wife shall be free to go out with her husband and join in his pleasures and amusements.

"Later, too, when babies arrive, Belle Mere establishes herself as nurse in chief. It is she who accompanies the children to the park or plays with them untriflingly throughout a rainy day.

"What would you?" she says. "My daughter must occupy herself with her husband. Otherwise . . ."

"Yet there is nothing in all this that

English mother-in-laws would not gladly do. Why, then, must English mothers and married daughters live rigidly apart? Even a visit from mother-in-law to a young menage is too apt to result in tears.

"The reason is not far to seek. It lies in fact and tactics.

"From the moment her child is married the French mother disciplines herself to what she considers a sacred duty. It is to idolize her son or daughter-in-law.

"The wife's mother and husband speedily become fast friends. He consults her in all his difficulties; she even advises him in his business affairs.

"Similarly if it is the husband's mother who shares the house, she sets a halo upon the wife. True, Belle Mere does the housekeeping, sees to the cooking, helps with the sewing. But the glory of it all she ascribes to the young wife.

"How different is the method of the British mother-in-law!

"My darling," she whispers, as soon as she enters her son-in-law's house, tell me, are you happy? Is he all you thought him? Is he kind to you?

"And Belle Mere?

"My little," she exclaims, "that young man is adorable and he worships you? But what have you got for his dinner?"

"In the quarrels of everyday life Belle Mere invariably supports her son-in-law. But, strange to say, both mother and husband are frequently won over to the daughter's viewpoint. Oh, how wise and how truly kind is Belle Mere!"

When the King Opens Parliament.

There are a pair of gates in London that are kept permanently shut to conveyances every day of the year except one. These gates lead out of Dean's Yard, Westminster, into a lane that runs straight down to the House of Lords. They are only opened on the day on which His Majesty the King opens Parliament in person.

On that day His Majesty proceeds from Buckingham Palace in a wonderful old coach, drawn by jet-black horses. Whilst the King is on his way Yeomen of the Guard still search the vaults under the Houses of Parliament, to ensure the safety of the monarch and his Ministers.

When the Sovereign reaches the House of Lords guns are fired in St. James' Park. The moment of arrival is signalled by hand. Flag-signallers stand on the towers of the Houses of Parliament, and send their messages to other signallers on Government offices overlooking the park. From thence it is conveyed to the troops below.

Ministers await the arrival of the King outside the House, and then take up their position in the procession to the Lords. Usually a large number of peeresses attend as well.

Everybody stands, and it is "hats off" for the Black Rod when he passes down the central corridor on his way to summons the Commons, who enter a few minutes later at a rapid march—their pace is always quick—to hear the King's speech.

The King's Speech is prepared by the Cabinet, and deals with the international situation, and reviews the legislation it is intended to introduce during the next Parliamentary year.

Sunday School Founder Got Idea from Shepherd.

Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, is acknowledged as the founder of the Sunday School, says the London Daily News, but nothing is heard of Emmanuel Twynning, the shepherd of Magpie Bottom, Sheepscote, Gloucestershire, from whom Raikes got his idea.

"Magpie Bottom is a beautiful crinkle at the edge of Sheepscote, where the lane departs down the valley, at last reaching Gloucester, eight miles away," the writer says. "I don't know where marjoram grows so well as along the dry banks of the lane by Magpie Bottom; and the common-like field just over the wall is in summer almost one mass of thyme.

"From Gloucester to Sheepscote is a good deal more than the Sabbath journey that was no doubt deemed correct in the time of Robert Raikes; and the young man must have been up here to take a service. At any rate, as he went by Magpie Bottom there was shepherd Emmanuel Twynning in that age-scented little paradise, with a ring of children round him, explaining perhaps the pastoral parables of the New Testament.

"Master Bob Raikes stopped, perhaps joined in a hymn and talked to the shepherd, asking him how he went on when the weather was not so favorable. He was told that on wet days some badly outworn sheltered the class, and that, come wet or fine, there was a class every Sunday.

"During the walk back to Gloucester the thought took root and, without the thyme and the marjoram and the insect-scented chirruping of grasshoppers, Raikes took up his shepherding in the new streets of the cathedral city.

"There is still plenty of Twynnings in Gloucester; but, though at Sheepscote there are at present none."

There were 426 Canadian chaplains on active service during the war; 103 gained medals, 21 were wounded, and 6 died.

THE GREAT FAMINE IN NORTH CHINA

THE RESULT OF FLOOD AND OF DROUGHT.

Five Provinces, Chihli, Shantung, Honan, Shensi and Shansi, Swept by Scourge.

In China ten persons are dying every minute from starvation. This means that six hundred people pass away each hour and fifteen thousand perish between sunrise and sunset. Forty-five millions are directly affected and one-third of this number are actually starving and will succumb before spring. Such is the appalling situation to-day in the land of the yellow man in what is rapidly becoming the most stupendous misfortune of all history.

The world's ear has long been attuned to the piteous plea for help. Until the great Chinese famine developed, most of the appeals for aid have come from the innocent victims of war. The tragedy there was man-made. The Far Eastern calamity which now implores the assistance of western civilization is the result of flood and drought. Man had no part in sowing this whirlwind of death and suffering. The elements are solely responsible.

Eighty-five Millions Affected.

Clearly to understand the dreadful Chinese dilemma you must know first of all that in the northeastern corner of the oriental republic are the provinces of Chihli, Shantung, Honan, Shensi and Shansi, five of the most populous districts of a much-populated country. Under normal conditions eighty-five million people live here, and they comprise more than one-fourth of the entire human element in China. Ninety per cent. are farmers, whose principal crops have been wheat, millet, corn and beans. So densely settled is this region that the crops, large as they are in ordinary times, are barely sufficient to feed the inhabitants. And decrease in productivity, therefore, automatically works a hardship because in this particular section of China transportation facilities are hopelessly inadequate.

The people of these five provinces are simple, frugal and thrifty folk. They usually harvest two crops a year. In 1916 the output was only fair and there began the series of circumstances which has now engulfed them in sorrow and suffering. Before the autumn harvest was well under way, the land was inundated by a flood which wiped out entire towns and villages, ravaged the countryside and caused a loss of \$100,000,000.

The Chinaman is by temperament a stoic, and the farmers began to rebuild their shattered fortunes. Ill-luck dogged them, because the crops of 1917 and 1918 were reduced. Still they persisted and again sowed the fields in 1919. Both crops that year, as well as the following year, were complete failures. The net result is that the advent of the present winter found eighty-five millions of people virtually stripped of sustenance and without resource of any kind. What little grain had been husbanded was soon wiped out. When hundreds of thousands sought to escape to other provinces and take up the burden of life anew, they were met by cordons of police at the frontiers and forbidden to enter. Forced back to their own desolate firesides they had to make the most out of nothing.

Greatest Calamity in History.

Other calamities pale before this colossal visitation. The world war cost approximately 17,500,000 lives. The black death in England in 1348 and 1349 caused 2,000,000 deaths. The Irish famine of 1846 killed 1,000,000, and the Indian famine of 1866 took toll of 1,450,000. The Chinese famine of 1878 with its 9,500,000 victims does not equal the present peril which, as I have already intimated, will depopulate China to the extent of 15,000,000 before it has run its dread course. It is, therefore, the supreme affliction yet imposed upon mankind.

The whole pain-ridden narrative of human suffering contains no more poignant revelations than are disclosed in China to-day. Here are some specimen chapters of tragedy culled from the larger story of a nation in distress:

A missionary encountered a woman wailing on the banks of a river. When he asked her the cause of her grief she replied: "I have thrown my baby into the waters rather than have him die of starvation in my arms as two of my other little ones did."

Along the highways in the devastated area it is no uncommon sight to behold girls tied to trees by their parents and left to starve. This shows that the pangs of hunger have driven many thousands of men and women insane. With this maddening hunger has been born a desperation that forces parents to every terrible extreme.

To visit the famine field is to touch grief and encounter sacrifice. Life is literally eeked out. In Honan a representative of the Associated Press found a family lying exhausted by the roadside. When he asked them how they had subsisted they told him that they ate chaff and that three-fourths of a pound of this had to suffice for six persons for a day. In a village nearby a population of 2,000 before had dwindled to 200.

A family of five plodded northward

—and the worst is yet to come



H. Wellington

on the public road in the Shensi province until the mother's strength failed. Their funds were exhausted and they had to have food. The eldest child, a girl, was sold at the first village for ten dollars. Before the day ended the mother dropped again; she was unable to carry her newly born baby any further, and it was thrown into a convent well. Three days later this entire family had been wiped out. It is a common occurrence.

Collapse of Family Structure.

I could continue these stories of sacrifice and suffering indefinitely. Yet I have only revealed one phase of the hideous picture. The famine area is blasted and blighted. Some parts of it are like the ravished region of northern France. The farmers have stripped their houses of everything salable, and this even includes the wooden supports and roofs. In order to obtain money for food, the animals, clothing and bedding are being disposed of at pathetically low prices.

A lamentable feature of this sordid drama, and one of the most difficult elements that will enter into the ultimate problem of reconstruction, is the utter collapse of the Chinese family structure. Many of the farmers in the afflicted area are selling their farms at from one-fifth to one-tenth the normal price. Wealthy men in the market towns and some from outside the ravaged area—the vultures that prey on need—are buying up these parcels of land and extorting the hard bargains born of dire distress. This means that the farmer, whose principal asset is his plot of ground, becomes an outcast. If he should survive these days of gloom his hearthstone is destroyed and he becomes a wanderer on the face of the earth.

The average Chinese family group ranges from fifteen to twenty mouths. With the land gone it is impossible to hold the domestic circle together or to earn enough in one generation to buy back the lost acres. In China land is the sole possession that passes from generation to generation. Thus the cataclysm that sweeps through the prostrate region is not only sending millions to the grave but carrying other millions down into the hopeless sink of poverty.

China is doing her share. Provinces, officials and merchants have contributed largely to the relief fund. A governor general of one province, who recently died, made a bequest of half a million dollars in his will. A wealthy Chinese merchant of the Straits Settlements has donated \$1,500,000. A Merchants' Guild of Shanghai contributed \$1,000,000. Chinese students in Peking borrowed from Canadians their Tag Day and raised thousands of dollars for the sufferers in this enterprising western manner.

Longevity and Chewing.

How reasonable it would seem to be to learn to chew food twice as long as we do, and as a natural consequence, eat half as much as we are accustomed to eat. And we might add that a natural result also would be that we would live twice as long.

Old age comes on, we are told, by the gradual decrease in the body's power to eliminate waste matter. People who practice "Fletcherizing," or very thorough chewing, are adding many years to their lives.

We are accustomed to thinking of meat as being the only food which requires very thorough mastication. Everything we eat or drink should be taken slowly so as to be well mixed with saliva. Even milk should be slowly sipped instead of being drunk as water.

Any practice which eliminates doctors' bills and improves the health is a great economy, of course, but think, too, of cutting that grocery bill in half! When ordering two pounds of steak for dinner, remember that one pound will do even better than two—if you take time to chew it well.

Matching Wits With a Grizzly.

The cunning of an old bear that Mr. Enos A. Mills tells about in his book The Grizzly, shows what a wily antagonist you will have against you if you ever try to match wits with old Ephraim.

After passing an hour or more without seeing the bear, says Mr. Mills, who was following a grizzly to study his behavior, I climbed a cliff, hoping to get a glimpse of him on some ridge ahead. I could see his line of tracks crossing a low ridge beyond and felt that he might still be an hour or so in the lead. But in descending the cliff, I chanced to look back along my trail. Just at that moment the bear came out of the woods behind me. He was trailing me!

I do not know how he discovered that I was following him. He may have seen me or scented me. At any rate, instead of coming directly back and thus exposing himself, he had very nearly carried out his well-planned surprise when I discovered him. I found out afterwards that, leaving his trail far ahead of me, he had turned and walked back in his own footprints for a distance. After tramping this stretch a number of times he had leaped into scrubby timber and made off on the side where his tracks did not show.

After discovering him on my trail I went slowly along as if unaware of his presence. He followed within three hundred feet of me. When I stopped he stopped. He occasionally watched me from behind bushes, a tree or a boulder.

I concluded to turn the tables on him. After crossing a ridge where I was for the moment out of his sight, I turned to the right and ran for nearly a mile. Then, circling back into our old trail behind the bear, I traveled serenely along, imagining that he was far ahead. I was suddenly startled to see his shadow move from behind a boulder near the trail, only three hundred feet ahead of me! At the place where I had left the trail to circle behind him he had stopped and apparently guessed my movements, for, turning in his tracks, he had come a short distance back on the trail and lain down behind the boulder to wait for me.

I went on a few steps after discovering him, and he moved to keep out of sight. I edged toward a tall spruce, which I planned to climb if he charged. Pausing by the spruce, I could see his silver-gray fur as he peered at me from behind the boulder. I concluded finally that it was best not to follow him farther. Going a short distance down among the trees, I built a rousing fire. Between it and the cliff I spent the night, satisfied that I had had adventure enough for one outing.

Music Hath Charms.

Do animals like music? The effect of it on various wild creatures was recently studied at the London Zoological Gardens. For most of the tests a violinist supplied the music.

Whether tarantulas listened or did not listen could not be determined; they remained unmoved and sulky. Not so the scorpions; after a few notes, they became agitated and writhed and danced tumultuously; their excitement increased with every crescendo and decreased with every diminuendo.

In the reptile cages the effect was more marked. The monster lizard listened and swayed; the black snakes were attentive and started up and hissed. A box crept as close as possible to the instrument and seemed enraptured. Of all the snakes the cobra is said to be the most susceptible to music; the specimen at the Zoo did not belie the reputation of its kind. On hearing the violin it raised itself on its tail in the traditional attitude, spread its hood and swayed to and fro.

The polar bear stood up at the front of its cage to listen and showed much pleasure. The wolves snarled and cowered in fear, with their tails between their legs. Their hair bristled, and their bodies quivered with fright. The foxes and jackals acted in the same way.

The elephant did not care for the music; on the contrary it trumpeted and snorted with rage. Some of the monkeys listened eagerly, with nods and gestures of appreciation; others scowled and turned away in disgust.

After the violinist, players on the piccolo and the flute performed. As a rule, the shrill notes of the piccolo annoyed, frightened or enraged the animals, whereas the softer tones of the flute soothed and pleased them.

Motoring on a Wall.

The first motor vehicle introduced into West China has caused a great sensation.

A missionary residing in Szechuan, returning from a holiday, took back with him a motor-cycle, the gift of some friends in America. It is the first thing on wheels seen west of Hankow, and the owner spends most of his time demonstrating its powers to schools and civic bodies in the provincial capital.

This motor-cycle has given its owner more publicity than all the missionary work he has done in the city.

There is a certain amount of thrill in navigating the first motor-cycle through the narrow streets of a Chinese city, and up to the present the only comfortable place for driving has been found to be the top of the city wall!

Your body contains as much phosphorus as 5,000 boxes of matches.