

**FISHING IN CHINA.**

**The Rod and Line Made Superfluous by the Cormorant.**  
[New York Sun.]

"The first time I ever saw a fishing cormorant at work under the direction of its Chinese master, I thought it was one of the most amusing and at the same time interesting sights imaginable," said Engineer George Dean, who has spent a number of years in China. "I was walking along the Min river one day soon after arriving in China, and came to a bamboo boat or raft moored to the pier of a bridge. I noticed a native squatting on the raft, and saw what at first I thought were a number of ducks grouped at one end of it. They were all faced toward the Chinaman, and he was gazing steadily at them with his hands on his knees.

"I stopped to see what was going on. Suddenly the man extended his right hand, palm upward, toward one of the birds, which I then saw were not ducks, for one that the Chinaman reached his hand to waddled as briskly as it could toward him, and hopped on the open palm. The man stroked its feathers fondly, rubbed his cheek along its neck, which he kissed now and then, and talked to it in Chinese, evidently in endearing terms. The bird seemed delighted. It laid its head on the Chinaman's arm, rubbed its peculiar bill against his face, and returned all his caresses. This lasted at least a minute, and then the man moved with the bird to the further side of the float, and placed it on the edge. Then for the first time it came to me that this was a Chinese fisherman, working with cormorants.

When the cormorant was placed on the edge of the raft it dipped its bill in the water, snapped it together loudly, looked up and down the side of the float, turned its head and fixed its glistening black eyes an instant on its master, and then slid beneath the surface without a sound, scarcely leaving a ripple behind it. The Chinaman seated himself again and awaited the reappearance of his bird, without any apparent concern or anxiety. The other birds remained standing at the end of the raft, almost motionless, and without removing their eyes from their master. The bird that had dived into the water remained beneath the surface for probably a quarter of a minute, and then reappeared, popping almost out of the water as it came up. The lower half of a fish protruded from its mouth. The bird swam straight to the raft, climbed upon it, and jumping on the master's knee, held its head up for him to remove the fish. The Chinaman pulled the fish from the bird's mouth with one hand, while he stroked its neck and plumage with the other, and whispered words of approval. The cormorant shook out its feathers, and showed its delight in various ways.

"Again its master placed it on the edge of the raft, and once more it glided noiselessly in the water. The other birds maintained their stolidity, apparently unmindful of what was going on around them. The cormorant that was fishing appeared in a short time, and again had made a successful dive. The same caressing was gone through with, and the bird was started in the water a third time. It now seemed to be thoroughly warmed up to its work, and went at it with an avidity that showed plainly the pleasure it took in it. The third time it was gone longer than usual, and when it finally came up it had no fish. The change in its actions was striking. It swam frantically about in the water, twisting and turning and evincing the greatest distress, but turn which way it might, it kept its sharp eyes fixed on its master, with an appealing expression. It made no move to approach the raft, and when the Chinaman raised his hand and pointed

downward with the fore finger, the bird dived again and so quickly that it was gone like a flash. In a few seconds up it came, bearing in its mouth a large fish. This time it swam boldly for the raft, deposited its prey at its master's feet, and showed plainly by the joyfulness of its actions as he stroked its arched neck that it had redeemed itself.

"When the Chinaman placed the third fish in his basket he took the cormorant and placed it in the center of the raft. It seemed to understand that it had done its work satisfactorily and was entitled to rest, for it strutted proudly away and took up its position at the other end of the raft."

**The Decay of Will Power.**

[Boston Gazette.]

Strong wills are becoming as rare as healthy physical organizations. The world is "Fu-sy," but only because humanity is working itself too much. Brain tissue has increased, but healthy, vigorous thought has diminished. Affections have become realities, and realities affections. A toothache convert us into invalids, where our ancestors laughed at the gout. We have beaten the gold leaf so thin that it has lost its own color, and shines with a ghastly green light. Sentiment has carried us past common sense; we have had such a terror of the flesh that we have cultivated brain at the expense of motive tissue, and have produced a giant's skull that is too heavy for the dwarf legs to bear. Emotions have been improved; brain has increased, but strong, vigorous thought has diminished.

Humanity has made a rapid journey toward perfection; but the point has been now reached when rest and relaxation becomes a necessity. We have conquered worlds; let us now return for a while to the old Greek proverb, and try to conquer ourselves.

**Recommended to "That Young Man."**

[Philadelphia Sunday Herald.]

The littleness of any one person's knowledge is astonishing. "I do not even know an astronomer," says Mr. Richard A. Proctor, "who is not ignorant in some departments of his own subject; nor any chemist, geologist, botanist, entomologist, or other specialist, who—if really a master—will not admit that there are departments of his special subjects about which he knows very little. How much more ignorant must he be of subjects outside the few he can have made his own."

Mrs. Sigourney: We speak of educating our children; do we know that our children also educate us?

**Gilbert's Palace.**

[Enter Ocean.]

Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the author of unperishing "Pinafore," personally prepared the plans and superintended the construction of his fine new house in Harrington gardens, and he is exceedingly well satisfied with it. Its interior walls are faced with white-glazed bricks, and throughout the house is lighted by electricity supplied by a dynamo and steam engine in the cellar. In the dining-room the electric lamps are of cut glass made in exact imitation of pineapples. The drawing-room fireplace is of carved alabaster.

**Did I Know Which Was Which.**

[Burlington Free Press.]

A New Hampshire editor was attacked by a tramp the other day, and in crying out for help was delighted to see a man running to the spot. The tramp, however, continued to maltreat the editor, while the stranger hovered near, but failed to close in. "Why don't you help me?" exclaimed the discomfited editor. "Because I can't tell which of you is the tramp and which ain't," was the candid reply.

**THIEVES OF BOOKS.**

**Kleptomaniacs with Literary Inclinations Who Need Careful Watching.**

[Philadelphia Times.]

"That book will cost you \$3, sir," said a clerk in a Market street book store, politely, but with an incisive tone that showed he was not to be trifled with, to a young man whom he surprised in a remote corner, where he had been lingering long over a case of handsomely-bound volumes. The young man was well dressed and of gentlemanly appearance, and was evidently near-sighted. He glanced up hurriedly, his face colored, and his eyes, in spite of the friendly mask of a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, betrayed confusion and chagrin.

Then he drew from the pocket of his skin-faced overcoat a handsome copy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. With a face that would have afforded Burton an excellent study, he thumbed the volume a moment, mumbled that the binding didn't exactly suit him and left the store with more speed than dignity.

"I had been watching him for twenty minutes," said the clerk. "Steal it? Of course he intended to steal it. You have no idea of the number of books that are stolen by apparently respectable people from the shelves of stores and libraries."

"I suppose hundreds of books are stolen from us every year," said Mr. Stuart, manager of one of our book stores. "In many cases the thieves are never caught. Frequently when they are detected they are found to be people of such good social standing that we mercifully permit them to settle the affair without the mortification of a public prosecution."

"Quite recently I detected a case of systematic sneak-thieving which had been going on for months. If I should give you the name of the offender you would be astonished. He is one of Philadelphia's most respected citizens. He baffled us for a long time, simply because I thought him above suspicion. Finally a clerk hinted to me that this gentleman was responsible for the recent disappearance of many valuable books. 'I miss a volume every time he leaves the store,' said the clerk. 'Impossible,' said I. 'He cannot be the man.'

"I placed a watch upon his movements, however, and detected him the very next time he came into the store. He settled the matter with us, and in consideration of his high reputation in the community we did not prosecute him. We caught a fellow a month or two ago who was gradually accumulating a whole set of Washington Irving's works by carrying out one at a time, in the hope that it would not be missed. He had secured 'The Sketch Book' and the 'Alhambra,' but we dropped on him just as he was getting away with 'Knickerbocker's History.' He was taking them out by the common process known as 'sub-coat-tailing.' Many people who would not take a penny belonging to another will steal books with apparent impunity. I know men whom I would trust with my watch and my pocket-book, but I would not trust them five minutes behind the shelves of this store.

"Experience tells me that a man whose tastes are literary and whose means are limited will always bear watching in a book store, especially if he is a frequent visitor. One of the most annoying experiences is to find that some literary sneak thief has taken one of a set or series of some rare edition which is not easily replaced. In this way I have recently had costly sets of Shakespeare, Carleton and Ruskin made wholly unsaleable.

"Books are frequently ruined in another way. Some of these kleptomaniacs have a penchant for the handsome steel engravings and portraits that often adorn a frontispiece. They take a

look from the shelf, insert a wet string between the front leaves, and then quietly replace it. In fifteen or twenty minutes the string has so moistened the paste that the entire leaf can be removed without tearing it or making the least noise."

**Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.**

[Joe Howard in Philadelphia Press.]

She is petite, with a large head and oval face, the features of which, like all that branch of the Beecher family, are very heavy and strongly marked. Her eyes are large and lustrous, and generally beam with a roguish twinkle, that is fascinating to this day. She wears her hair precisely as when I first knew her, parted in the middle, where the Lord designed all women's hair should part, and terminating in long, pretty gray curls, which fall gracefully on either side of her face. Her manner is soft and quiet, almost deferential. She stoops, and always did, and the customary attitude of her hands is that described by Solomon, or the queen of Sheba, or some oldtime writer, when he said: "A little more sleep, a little more slumber and a little more folding of the hands to rest." Quiet dignity, a calm sense of superiority and gentle, unobtrusive womanly tenderness would seem to be the habit of this woman, whose name is known wherever the human tongue can speak and the mortal eye can read.

**A Strange Problem.**

[Rigolo in New York Sun.]

The agricultural returns which have just been published in England present a remarkably strange problem. The cultivated area of Great Britain has increased 81,000 acres during the current year, and 1,363,000 acres since 1873, yet the period since 1873 has been the most disastrous of the century, and the food imported has increased in value from \$23,290,000 in 1864 to \$787,690,000 last year. During this period of increasing cultivation of the soil there has been a decrease of 1,011,000 acres in arable land, and, although there has been an increase of 2,375,000 in grazing land, there has been scarcely any increase in flocks and herds. The number of sheep has even decreased 3,359,000 in spite of the fact that the price of meat has been constantly rising during that period. This anomalous state of things is difficult to explain, except upon the theory of a greatly improved mode of living of the masses.

No classification of mankind has been made that satisfactorily dispose of the Australians. In complexion, features and the contour of their skeletons, they are of the negrooid type, but they lack the frizzly hair of the negro races. Some ethnologists believe Australia was originally peopled with frizzly-haired Melanesians or Oceanic persons, and that the present stock is the result of an infusion from some other race, like the dark-skinned aborigines who still live in some parts of southern India. The Australians show no evidence of Malayan or Mongolian origin.

Porto Rican ladies, although as dark as mulattos, carry with them to all public places a face powder made from grinding a peculiar shell; and when they think no one is looking their way they give their faces fresh coats of it. Of course the powder shows, but good breeding makes the observer technically blind to the ludicrous combination of black nature and white pulverized shell.

**Concerning the "Hannom."**

[Chicago Ledger.]

"And them's what folks calls handsome, are they?" said a farmer as he watched a couple of hansom cabs rolling down the street. "Well, I wonder what they'd think if they could see a new wagon with red wheels?"