

It is under the last-named title that it was originally circulated in olden times, something after the manner of her Majesty's *Court Circular*. The earliest notice of it is in the annals of the Emperor Kaiyuan, who reigned from 713 to 741 of the Christian era; and, furthermore, in the "Notes on the Poetry of the Tang Dynasty," the following passage occurs:—"Hau Yih being in retirement at home, a man one day knocked at his door and offered congratulations, saying 'There is a decree in the *Court Announcements* to the effect that one of the officials of the court has brought your name forward, and you have been appointed to a secretaryship.'" This appears in a note to the following passage in the history of the Sung Dynasty:—"Subsequently to the period of Cheng-ho (A. D. 1111-1117), the Emperor, Hwei Tsung, frequently went about *incognito*. At first this was scarcely known to the public, until, in an address of thanks from Tsai King, where he says, 'Your Majesty's light equipage has seven times honored my abode.'" Upon this the matter became known on every side by means of the *Court Announcements*. These evidences of the antiquity of the Chinese Government *Gazette* are taken by Mr. Mayers from a collection of miscellaneous notes, published about a century ago, under the title "Explanation of Common Things." He cautiously refrains from giving any decided opinion with regard to the period to which the first issue can be traced, and says there is no evidence to show when it was first printed, further than the general claim the Chinese make in their national annals to the invention of printing from blocks of wood more than a century before movable types were used in Europe. Moreover, they have a method of printing from sheets of wax, which resembles lithography, that dates from an earlier period, and both are used at the present day in the issues of this venerable newspaper, which appears in much the same form as it did centuries ago.

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### A Sad and Curious End.

The sad news comes from Paris of the death of W. Benton, the king of American reporters, who for seven or eight years past—so M. E. Decschaumes says in *le Figaro*—has been drawing a fantastic salary from one of the great American dailies. The lamented Mr. Benton scattered abroad the dollars of his journal with princely munificence, was on intimate terms with all the political and military celebrities of Europe, spoke eight languages with perfect fluency, and assisted at all the wars of the Old World as a most conscientious spectator. He had gained admission to Prince Gortschakoff's presence as a tailor, to Bismarck's as a dog merchant, to the Congress of Berlin, as a photographer; he had gone to royal banquets disguised as a waiter and to royal burials as a coffin-bearer. In 1867 he made the acquaintance of Mile-Schneider in the role of a Brazilian diamond miner, while, during the Franco-Prussian war, he figured as a Turco (blacker than life), a Zouave or Uhlan, according as the exigencies of the situation demanded. This accomplished journalist was in a German city, where the sensation at the time was a troupe of trained bears. There were five of them, and they went through their drills and other performances with such startling regularity that it was very generally suspected that they were not bears, but men disguised in bearskins. Mr. Benton thought as much, and offered to wager with the manager that he would enter the den, but the manager declined to sanction his enterprise. Mr. Benton thereupon invited all the journalists of the city to dinner, assured them that the bears were frauds and invited them to be present at the afternoon performances next day, when he intended to unmask the humbug. Having bribed an employé of the menagerie, Benton, disguised as a bear, entered the cage. His five companions seemed furiously excited, but he attributed this to their desire to fend off suspicion. The public applauded most enthusiastically. It was then that the unhappy being, desirous of carrying out his plan, turned towards the press box, removed his bear's head and bowed politely. A tremendous roar of laughter ensued, followed by an immense shriek of terror. The bears, on seeing his human face, precipitated themselves upon the unfortunate man, and before the tamer could take steps to save him, the reporter, frightfully mutilated, had breathed his last.