

A CHINESE PILE DRIVER.

Piles were being driven in one of the new buildings for a foundation for a punch. They were 8 inches in diameter and 14 feet long. The staging was bamboo, and so was the frame for the hammer, which was a round piece of cast iron, with a hole in the centre for a guide-rod.

Attached to the hammer blocks were twenty-seven ropes, carried up to the top of the frame and down on the outside, looking very much like the old-fashioned Maypole. Twenty-seven women had hold of the ends, and with a sing-song, all together, pulled down; up the rod, four feet, travelled the hammer; then, at a scream, all let go, and down it came on top the pile, which was unprotected by a band or ring. The women were paid 20 cents in gold per day. This Maypole driver is in general use throughout Japan and China.—F. F. Prentiss, in Cassier's Magazine for October.

FAULTS IN GENERAL CONTRACTING.

One of the conditions involved by the system of general contracting, says Carpentry and Building, or the letting of an entire contract to one man, is that the obligation for payment to the sub-contractors rests with the general contractor. When a general contractor takes an entire contract he becomes liable to all sub-contractors for their share of the work. In other words, for the purpose of the contract he assumes the position of owner to the sub-contractor. It is frequently the case under this system that a general contractor takes a job without sufficient capital to carry it through, depending upon payment by owner as the work proceeds, for the money wherewith to pay the sub-contractors. This condition of affairs so places the sub-contractor that if the portion of work being done by the general contractor, as the carpentering, for example, is unsatisfactory to the owner, the latter can delay payment, and all the sub-contractors are compelled to wait for their money until the difference between the general contractor and the owner is settled. Again, if the plumbing work is unsatisfactory to the owner the general

contractor becomes responsible, and the owner may delay payment until the fault is rectified. In this case all other sub-contractors, whose work may be perfectly satisfactory, are compelled to wait for their money until a fault, in no wise their own, is corrected. The fault is not so much in the system as in the manner in which it is practiced. Every contractor who takes an entire contract should, in justice to himself and as a proper protection to the sub-contractors, be possessed of sufficient capital to pay the sub-contractors when their accounts are due, regardless of any conditions that may exist between himself and the owner. Contractors lacking the requisite amount of

capital should resist the demand of the owner that all parts of the work be included in one contract.

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