

are Chinese officials. Below is shown the process of winding silk from the cocoon.

The Great Wall was built upon the northern boundaries of the empire two hundred years before our Saviour came to earth. It was designed as a defence against the warlike Tartars, but is now quite useless. It runs from the sea along the northern border of the empire for 1300 miles (some authorities say 1500), passing through the valleys and over lofty mountain ranges. The wall varies from fifteen to thirty feet in height, and is about as thick as it is high, while at intervals there are large square towers, some of them being fifty feet high. It is said that six horsemen could ride abreast on the top of the wall. What energy and patience the Chinese must have had to build this enormous structure, which has lasted now for over two thousand years!

There are said to be three religions in China. One originated with Confucius, a sage who lived about six hundred years before Christ. All the Chinese reverence him, and yet a large portion of them follow another religion than the one he taught. Some are Taoists, and some are Buddhists. But while these three forms of religion are professed, the people care little about any one of them. Once or twice a year each Chinaman bows and worships heaven and earth, but every day of the year and in every house in the land, worship is offered to departed ancestors. The universal religion of China is the worship of ancestors. Each family keeps what are called ancestral tablets. These are boards, usually about twelve inches long by three wide, on which are written the name, rank, titles, birth and death days of each deceased member of the household. Every day, morning and evening, incense is burned and worship offered before these tablets.

One of the saddest things about the religions of China is that none of them seem to have it for their object to make men better. A priest once said to a missionary: "Your religion does not give what the people want. When they worship they wish to know whether they can grow rich and recover from disease. In the case of believing in Jesus, there are no benefits of this kind." The people have no idea of a religion whose aim is to free from sin and make men pure.

Though the Chinese are good scholars and have many books, they are as superstitious as the lowest savages. They believe in ghosts and evil spirits, and one of their singular notions is that these evil spirits go in straight lines, and hence they make their streets crooked, so as to confuse and keep off the bad spirits. They also believe in an oracle by which they can foretell their fate. While incense is burning and crackers are fired off, to keep the god awake and attentive, the inquirer shakes a cup in which are placed strips of wood with some written words upon them, and from the strips that fall upon the ground he learns his fate.

Another singular notion of the Chinese is that they can convey to any spirit, whether human or divine, whatever they may please, by simply burning the article or an image of it, in the flames. Hence as they think that a friend, after his spirit leaves the body, will need just what he needed here, they burn paper images of those

subjects, and so fancy that they reach the departed soul. A missionary describes a paper house which he once saw built for a person who had died. "It was about ten feet high and twelve deep. It contained a sleeping-room, library, reception room, hall, and treasury. It was furnished with paper chairs and tables. Boxes of paper money were carried in. There was a sedan-chair, with bearers, and also a boat and boatman, for the use of the deceased in the unseen world. A table spread with food was placed in front of the house." This whole paper establishment was suddenly set fire to, and in the midst of a fusillade of crackers it quickly vanished in the flames. What a pitiable notion this is as to what human souls will need in the future!

This idea that whatever is burned in the sacred flame is thus conveyed to unseen spirits, is applied to prayers. The Chinaman always writes his prayers and then burns them. So he fancies they go up to the god or spirit he would address. The priests fill up blank prayers, according to the wishes of their customers who come with their various wants. People come to buy prayers for themselves and for others, and having had them filled out, they go away to burn them.

"O' WATER, BRIGHT WATER."

SOME love to drink from the foamy
brink,

Where the wine drop's dance they see,
But the water's bright, in its silver light,
And a crystal cup for me.
O, water, bright water! pure, precious, free!
Yes: tis water bright, in its silver light,
And a crystal cup for me.

O, a goodly thing is the cooling spring,
'Mong the rocks where the moss doth grow:
There's health in the tide and there's music
beside
In the brooklet's bounding flow,
O, water, &c.

As pure as Heaven is the water given,
'Tis forever fresh and new;
Distilled in the sky, it comes from on high,
In the shower and the gentle dew.
O, water, &c.

IN DOUBLE DANGER—A STRANGE ADVENTURE.



I had many a queer
voyage in my time
(said Capt. M—),
but the queerest I
ever had was one I
made (somewhat un-
expectedly, as you
will see) upon the
Great Fish River,
in South Africa, on
my way back from
a hunting excursion.

As I neared the bank I saw that the river was in full flood, more than twice its usual breadth, and running like a mill race. I knew at once that I should have a very tough job to get across—for a flooded African river is no joke, I can tell you. But I knew also that my wife would be terribly anxious if I didn't come back on the day that I had fixed—South Africa being a place where a good many things may happen to a man—and so I determined to chance it.

Just at the water's edge I found an old bushman that I knew well, who had a boat of his own, so I hailed him at once: "Well, Kaloomi, what will you take to put me across the river?"

"No go fifty dollars this time, baas" (master), said the old fellow, in his half-Dutch, half-English jargon. "Beat no got 'cross to-day, water good (great)!"

And never a bit could I persuade him, although I offered him money enough to make any ordinary bushman jump head first down a precipice. Money was good, he said, but it would be no use to him when he was drowned; and, in short, he wouldn't budge. "Well, if you won't take me across," said I at last, "lend me your boat, and I'll just do the job for myself. I can't very well take my horse with me, so that I'll just leave him here in pledge that I'll pay for the boat when I come back."

"Keep horse for you, master, quite willing; but 'spose you try 'cross to-day you never come back to ask for him."

He spoke so positively that, although I'm not easily frightened, I certainly did feel uncomfortable. However, when you've got to do a thing of that sort, the less you think of it the better, so I jumped into the boat and shoved off.

I had barely got clear of the shore when I found that the old fellow was right, for the boat shot down the stream like an arrow. I saw in a moment that there was no hope of paddling her across, and that all I could do was just to keep her head straight. But I hadn't the chance of doing that very long, for just then a big tree came driving along, and hitting my boat full on the quarter, smashed her like an egg shell. I had just time to clutch the projecting roots and whisk myself on to them, and tree and I went away down stream together at I don't know how many miles an hour.

At first I was so rejoiced at escaping just when all seemed over with me that I didn't think much of what was to come next, but before long I got something to think of with a vengeance. The tree, as I've said, was a large one, and the branch end (the opposite one to where I sat) was all one mass of green leaves. All at once, just as I was shifting myself to a safer place among the roots, the leaves suddenly shook and parted, and out peeped the great yellow head and fierce eyes of an enormous lion.

I don't think I ever got such a fright in my life. My gun had gone to the bottom with the boat, and the only weapon I had left was a short hunting knife, which, against such a beast as that, would be no more use than a bodkin. I fairly gave myself up for lost, making sure that in another moment he'd spring forward and tear me to bits.

But whether he had already gorged himself with prey, or whether (as I suspect) he was really frightened at finding himself in such a scrape, he showed no disposition to attack me, so long, at least, as I remained still. The instant I made any movement, however, he would begin roaring and lashing his tail, as if he were going to fall on me at once. So, to avoid provoking him, I was forced to remain stock still, although sitting so long in one position cramped me dreadfully.

There we sat, Mr. Lion and I, staring at each other with all our might—a very picturesque group, no doubt, if there had been anybody there to see it. Down, down the stream we went, the banks seeming to race past us as if we were going by train, while all around

broken timber, waggon wheels, trees, bushes, and the carcasses of drowned horses and cattle went whirling past us on the thick brown water.

All at once I noticed that the lion seemed to be getting strangely restless and turning his great head from side to side in a nervous kind of way, as if he saw or heard something he didn't like. At first I couldn't imagine what on earth was the matter with him, but presently I caught a sound which scared me much worse than it had done the lion. Far in the distance I could hear a dull booming roar, which I had heard too often not to recognize at once; we were nearing a waterfall!

I had seen the great falls of the Fish River more than once, and the bare thought of being carried over those tremendous precipices made my very blood run cold. Yet being devoured by a lion would hardly be much of an improvement, and as I hadn't the ghost of a chance of being able to swim ashore there really seemed to be no other alternative.

Faster and faster we went—louder and louder grew the roar of the cataract; the lion seemed to have given himself up for lost, and crouched down among the leaves, only uttering a low moaning whine every now and then. I was fairly at my wits' end what to do when all of a sudden I caught sight of something that gave me a glance of hope.

A little way ahead of us the river narrowed suddenly, a rocky headland thrust itself out a good way into the stream. On one of the lowest points of it grew a thick clump of trees, whose boughs overhung the water; and it struck me that, if we only passed near enough, I might manage to catch hold of one of the branches, and swing myself up on to the rock.

No sooner said than done. I started up, hardly caring whether the lion attacked me or not, and planted myself firmly upon one of the biggest roots, where I could take a good spring when the time came. I know that this would be my last chance, for by this time we were so near the precipice that I could see quite plainly, a little way ahead, the great cloud of spray and vapour that hovered over the great waterfall. Even at the best it was a desperate venture, and I can tell you that I felt my heart beginning to thump like a sledge hammer. As we came closer and closer to the point I thought what would happen if I missed my leap.

Just as we neared it, it happened by the special mercy of God that our tree struck against something and turned fairly cross-wise to the current, and with the lion on it swinging out into mid-stream, while my end was driven close to the rock on which the clump of trees grew.

Now or never! I made one spring (I don't think I ever made such another before or since) and just clutched the lowest bough; and as I dragged myself out to it I heard the last roar of the doomed lion mingling with the thunder of the waterfall as he vanished into the cloud of mist that overhung the precipice.

As for me it was late enough that night when I got home, and I found my poor wife in a fine fright about me; so I thought it just as well, on the whole, to keep my adventure to myself, and it wasn't till nearly a year later that she heard a word about my strange fellow-voyager.