

# The Feast of the Dead



SCATTERING FOOD OVER THE GRAVES

HERE was a feast in Chinatown last Sunday, or rather many feasts. To the Occidental mind the occasion of a memorial service for the dead is not associated with merriment and wassail; but the Chinaman thinks differently. And so last Sunday, the occasion of the annual ceremony of feeding the spirits of the departed at the Chinese cemetery, was a red letter day in the calendar of the Chinese colony here. The souls that hover about the cemetery at Foul Bay were propitiated with food, and at the same time there was much eating of pig and of dainty sweetmeats in all the Chinese homes.

The Chinese custom in this matter seems a little strange to the Easterner, but after all, perhaps it has as good a foundation as many European observances. One time a man wandered into a Chinese cemetery while the souls of the departed were being given their tribute, and he asked of a Celestial, in jesting guise, when the souls of the dead would come to eat the pig. With ready logic the Chinaman replied: "Allee! same time soul of white man come back to smell flowers." There was no possible answer to this argument.

Last Sunday, then, scores of family parties went out from Chinatown to the cemetery on the sea shore. They went in carriages, each family group occupying three or four vehicles, and each accompanied by an express wagon loaded with all sorts of Chinese delicacies. Principal among these latter, of course, was roast pig, the piece de resistance of the Chinese menu. Each party had at least one pig, and some had several. But there were also baked chickens in abundance, roast duck in profusion, bread, biscuits, sweetmeats, and everything that tickles the Chinese palate. Arrived at the cemetery, the dutiful Chinese unloaded the provisions, and formally offered them to the spirits of their departed relatives.

Down at the bottom of the cemetery, on a knoll facing the sea, are the furnaces for burning the offerings to the dead. The furnaces are two square structures of concrete, set about ten feet apart, and connected by a concrete table about three feet in height. As the various parties arrive they pile their offerings of food on the table. There seems to be some general arrangement as to priority, for one group is allowed to make its offering before another interferes, each ceremony occupying about ten minutes.

There is nothing at all funereal in the demeanor of the mourners. They jest among themselves, and considerable horse-play is carried on, the Chinese throwing bites of biscuit and such things at one another. Evidently the feeding of one's ancestors is the occasion for more or less merriment. And it also seems that ancestors have very peculiar appetites, and are easily appeased withal, for of the roast pig they receive only the shadow, the substance remaining for the delectation of the living. Boxes of Chinese cards, each inscribed with Chinese legends which probably relate to various kinds of food, are opened, and fed into the furnaces. The smoke from this burning is supposed to be highly nourishing for ancestors. Also, the mourners take biscuits and sweetmeats, and throw them in the direction of the graves to appease the spirits of their friends, and whatever other spirits may be loitering about the place.

There was a time when the annual ceremony at the Chinese cemetery was an annual event to whatever swishes might be in the vicinity. Succulent roast pigs, delicacies of every sort, were in those days left in the cemetery, for the spirits to devour at their leisure. As soon as the givers had departed, the Indians descended upon the viands, and robbed the hungry ancestors. This procedure wasn't at all pleasing to the Chinese people, and now the foods are carried back to Chinatown at the conclusion of the service. All that the spirits get are the printed cards and the biscuits with their stamped messages of good cheer.

One by one the parties arrive and leave. The process goes on all forenoon and well into the

afternoon. At last all the families have worshipped at the shrine, and all the spirits are appeased. By that time, there is high feasting going on in the homes of Chinatown, for what the ancestors have not taken is being eaten with gusto by the living descendants. There is roast pig, baked chicken and baked duck for all, and to spare.

## THE WASTE OF TIME IN TRAVELING

The influence of transport on civilization might some day be the subject of a great book, thinks the London Times. Very likely a German has already written about it at length. Germans have written about everything and collected facts concerning every subject under the sun. But the great book on this subject cannot yet be written; for the chief facts of it still belong to the future, and the whole of past history, up to the nineteenth century, will only supply an introduction.

Of course transport has always influenced civilization, and has always been one of the chief material concerns of the more civilized peoples; but until the invention of steam the machinery of transport had varied only in degree, not in kind, for several thousands of years. Probably Hadrian could travel about his empire more quickly than anyone making the grand tour after Waterloo. Transport on land up to that time was always dependent on the quality of roads and the organization of posts and wagons; and the size of towns, except on or near the sea coast or large navigable rivers, was limited by the narrow means of transport.

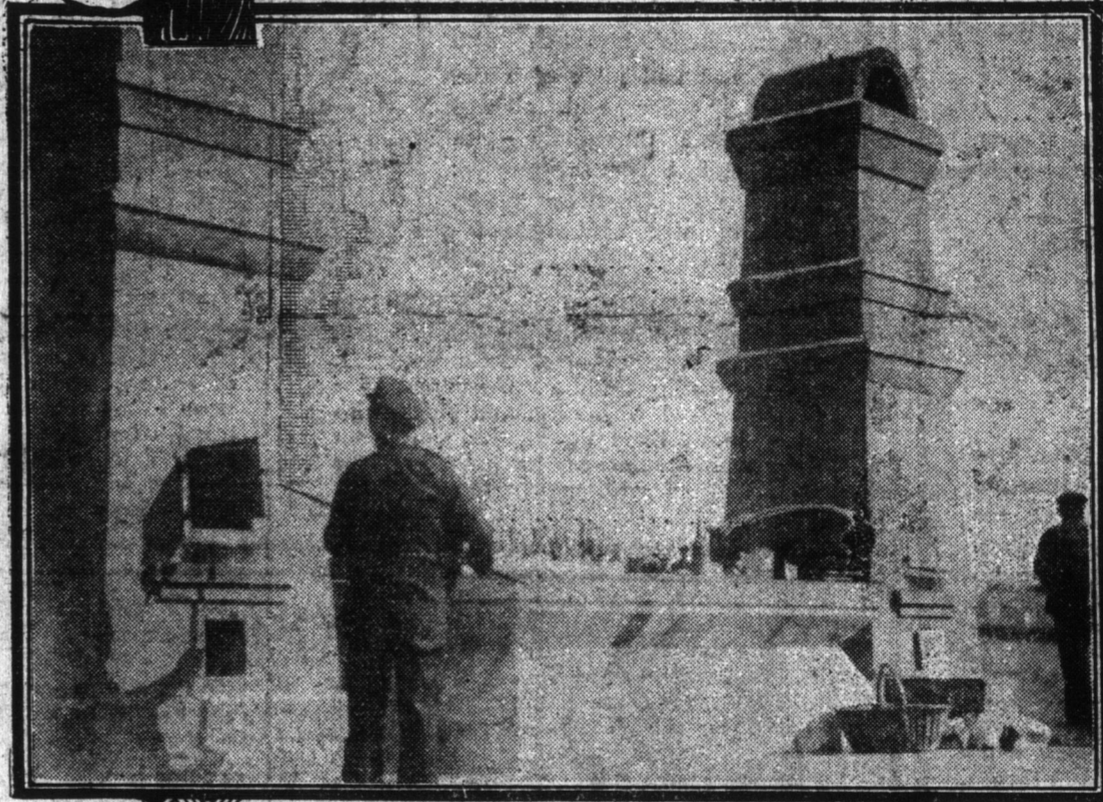
Railways put an end to these limitations and made the modern monster towns possible, wherever there were enough railways to feed them. This new possibility took our civilization by surprise; and the result was monster towns in which civilization was lost in a new kind of barbarism. We are scarcely yet recovering from that surprise, and are still bewildered by the barbarism which our own increased command over the forces of nature has produced; and now there are signs that that command is to be yet further increased to an enormous extent, and that the whole machinery of transport is to be revolutionized once again.

It is not likely that there will be goods or excursion airships in our time, but the first great difficulty in the conquest of the air has been overcome. Now that an inventor can make a flight of an hour's duration, he can learn by practical experience what hitherto could only be conjectured from theory, and he can acquire the skill and confidence which only practical experience can give. Therefore we may expect a very rapid advance in the construction of airships, and no one can tell how soon they may be of practical use.

Most of us, probably, look forward to that time with some apprehension. We have learnt by painful experience that the millennium cannot be brought about by machinery. We have even found some truth in those fantastic chapters of "Erewhon" which expound the theory that machines may get a life of their own and oust men from their supremacy on the earth. They seem already to have a blind power of their own, which civilization has not yet mastered for its own true purposes, and which is apt to pervert our very ideas of those purposes.

Civilization is not attained by moving swiftly from one place to another, but rather in making places so delightful that no one would wish to leave them. Machinery has not yet done much for us in that way; and it is little compensation that it should provide us with swift means of transport from places which it has made hideous. And yet it would be useless and foolish to oppose further mechanical advances; nor need we assume that they will always only provide us with minor compensations for major evils of their own creation. They may at last be employed to abolish the major evils which they have created.

If one revolution in the means of transport has produced the monster, unmanageable city of the present, another may help to reduce it to



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a manageable size. Men have been forced to congregate together in millions by defects, as well as by facilities of transport. The railway has this in common with the road, that it concentrates traffic; and concentration of traffic produces concentration of population. The flying machine would diffuse traffic instead of concentrating it, for it would need to follow no kind of beaten track and would have no points of departure and arrival fixed for it. If we add to these advantages an enormous increase of speed, it is evident that the flying machine, when it becomes of practical use, may cause a revolution in transport even greater than the revolution caused by railways; and there is reason for hoping that that revolution will be in the direction of what is good.

Any mechanical tendency to diffuse population will be furthered by the instincts and desires of the population itself. It is true that the poor now are apt to prefer the excitement of the town to the dullness of the country. But the country has been made dull by the growth of great towns and the concentration of all life into them. If this concentration ceased, if there were more numerous and smaller towns, free from provincial stagnation, the country would lose its dullness and huge cities would lose their attraction. Already there is a conscious effort towards diffusion, helped even now by the most modern improvements in transport, and already the size of our greatest towns is becoming a serious material disadvantage to their inhabitants. The amount of time and energy and money wasted every day in getting about London, and into it and out of it, is so enormous that, if there is much further increase in that waste, it will go far to nullify even the present advantages of concentration. Those advantages are all material. Our spiritual instincts revolt against them, and their revolt grows stronger every day. Every further advance in transport will help that revolt; and perhaps some of us will live to see the decline of London brought about by a great ring of subsidiary towns, each getting its first impulse of life from the Metropolis.

Thus it may be that all the conditions of our life will be swiftly altered again, and for the better. But the improvement will be great, only if we have learnt the lesson of the past: and re-

fuse to be taken by surprise yet again. Little towns can be as squalid as big ones, and even more barbarous, as any one can see in Yorkshire and Lancashire and the Black Country. A mere diffusion of London slums will not help us. We must be ready with our ideal of the small town of the future, and we must have the determination to make that ideal come true. For civilization consists, not in the perfecting of any kind of machinery, but in the use of machinery, as for everything else, for the realization of ideals. Without ideals there can be no civilization, and it is owing to the lack of them that machinery has so often produced only barbarism in the past.

## VESSELS BEARING ROYAL NAMES

One of the very strongest and most ineluctable of all superstitions in the royal navy—a superstition almost as strong today as ever it was—is that vessels bearing the name of royal personages are doomed to ill luck; and, strange as it may seem, there is an undeniable historical basis for this feeling.

Some of the most terrible disasters ever known in connection with the British navy have concerned war vessels with royal names. Two vessels called the Royal James came to disastrous ends. One of them exploded, and some 800 officers and seamen perished, the other ship so named was actually carried out of the mouth of the Thames by the Dutch under circumstances disgraceful to those in charge of the craft.

Then there is the forever memorable disaster to the Royal George, that turned over and sank in sight of crowds at Spithead, over 1,000 souls, among whom were 300 women, being sacrificed. And second only to this hideous disaster is that which afterwards befel the Royal Charlotte, which was consumed by fire off Leghorn, over 80 of the very flower of the navy perishing with her.

When in 1803 the Victoria, a new vessel and the very triumph of modern invention, was rammed and sank in sight of the whole fleet there was not a sailor, however matter of fact he might be, who did not remember the dire fate of a royal named craft.

## A Visitor's View of the Victoria Exhibition

"MARY MARKWELL" writes as follows in a recent issue of the Manitoba Free Press: By courtesy of the secretary of the Victoria exhibition management, J. E. Smart, I was permitted to visit the grounds of the great exhibition of 1908, and was but one of 50,000 who enjoyed to a supreme degree the sight of fullness in fruit, cattle, horses, poultry and other marvelous displays of this fairy island of the Pacific.

One might call the show an eye-opener indeed; for, until the natural gifts of Vancouver Island were gathered together in one market a body would hardly believe so much richness of native worth. One thing, however, was missing: the great bags and sheafs and arches of the golden wheat of the Western prairies. I missed them sorely, and was reminded there by that there is something "we" possess which Vancouver Island hasn't got.

The exhibit of fruits of all kinds, from the luscious peach down to the blackberry, was beyond description. Apples with the glow of September sunshine yet upon them—pears, golden and green, of splendid size and succulence. "Crabs" from the Mainland ran the Island a close chase for honors; but "the Island" was showered with red tickets most worthily won. The flower exhibit was unsurpassable. I saw 52 varieties of sweet peas, shown by one grower; the leaf of these of a diaphanous kind and a coloring incomparably beautiful. The flower tables were at all times surrounded by a throng of exclamation points in petticoats.

A honey table attracted everybody, and there I found "the difference" betwixt Australian and Vancouver Island honey. I may add Australia isn't in it when it comes to a comparison of flavors. I would draw attention, therefore, of our prairie importers to this fact: that British Columbia can provide the markets of the Middle West with this table delicacy at a less price and a greater desirable flavor than foreign bought.

The vegetable showing was superb, indeed; but it couldn't begin to compare with a Manitoba exhibit ten years back. Saskatchewan also has British Columbia "on the hip" in roots of the field; but Alberta, competing in horse flesh, might walk away from and walk all over British Columbia. I may say it took our neighboring state of Washington to bring in the best in this latter class. They were worthy of Kentucky, as we are used to hearing of "the blue grass" runners.

In arts and handicrafts the showing was small. British Columbia women do not seem to pride themselves on domestic economy. Neither was the exhibit of paintings or fancy work anything of size; but certainly the work shown in knitting and art embroidery was good. There was an entire absence of piece-quilt and of rag mat, so I suppose the "old-fashioned mother" has been buried in British Columbia.

The cattle show delighted my eyes: here British Columbia quite came up to a prairie exhibit in this class. No higher praise is necessary, is it? The poultry showing was good, but I saw nothing else in the farm class; my eyes were riveted on the race track, where a fine programme of races, balloon ascensions, Highland pipers and dances took place daily.

The plaisance had the usual number of "attractions" and "distractions"; Sunny South singers, fortune tellers, deep sea divers, etc. There was a great lack of good accommodation in refreshment booths. No liquor was allowed on the grounds, however; and I may add I never attended a better conducted exhibition.

The dress of the ladies was suited to the occasion; this, I may add, is a marked feature in British Columbia, especially on Vancouver Island. You never see a gentlewoman here overdressed; jewelry is kept for social functions, and whenever you see a monstrosity in hat or gown, you may safely say "strangers."

To the obliging (and indeed handsome) secretary of the exhibition, I make my best bow, acknowledging the favor of a pass to "gates, grand stand and horse show pavilion," all of which I visited, adding to my education in the variety and intensity as the beauty and value of the Victoria exhibition of 1908.

## SHOEING THE FAMILY

Families of French-Canadian farmers often equally numerically those of the old New England settlers. Visitors to the great country to the north will corroborate this statement. Additional proof, if any is needed, is given by a writer in the Chicago News in the following copy of an order received by the proprietor of a Quebec store:

"You will put some shoe on my family like this, and send by Sam Jameson, the carrier: One man, Jean St. Jean (me), forty-two years; one woman, Sophie St. Jean (she), forty-one years; Hermedes and Lenore, nineteen years; Honore, eighteen years; Celina, seventeen years; Narcisse, Octavia and Phyllis, sixteen years; Olivia, fourteen years; Philippa, thirteen years; Alexandre, twelve years; Rosina, eleven years; Bruno, ten years; Pierre, nine years; Eugene, we loss him; Edouard and Eliza, seven years; Adrien, six years; Camille, five years; Zoel, four years; Joseph, three years; Moise, two years; Muriel, one year; Hillaire, he go barefoot. How much?"

A curious fact about diamonds is that it is not uncommon for the crystals to explode as soon as they are brought up from the mine. Sometimes they have burst in the pockets of the warm hands of the miners, due to the effect of increased temperature. Large stones are more likely to do this than small ones. Valuable stones have been destroyed in this way.

A

of Captain Hugo-Hungarian General as a basis for in-ving men annually garia, and of these conscription for the service—nominally and three years for After finishing their kept for 18 years in ally long period of Bulgarian General of trained men for is difficult to ascer- the Reservists owing rays going on; but a n an Austrian mili- far as possible by 380,000 as the num- colors and in the fully trained. After are passed into the d would be available vent of a prolonged oimately 60,000 of sort of organization

men organized when

vided into nine divi-arters at the follow- ofia (1st Division), ), Sliven (3rd Divi- on), Rushchuk (5th sion), Dubnitza (7th h Division), Plevna se divisions has two of infantry and one batteries, except the ns, whose artillery atteries. A cavalry o the first six divi- mplement of admin- s, enabling the divi- e the field for an of- garians are properly details; but know- cadres, and the ar- expansion in time of o ascertain the war with sufficient accu- article. That war 20,000, giving an ap- ole nine divisions of , with 4,000 sabres to the above troops y division (2,500 sa- troops and units for n, bringing the total Bulgarian field army men, with 7,000 cav- elieved by Bulgarian d be massed at fixed e the frontier within bilize. There would trained Reservists and form suppl- ome 60,000 trained above arrangements ed, they will reflect Bulgarian General ed these remarkable ion of 4,000,000 to a peace military bud-

is necessary to leave oss the frontier into situation as between ot be discussed until n army has been as- communications ex- r, has been said to rmed of the rapid s made towards mil- consolidation of the

## LUCKY DAYS

many other public tions, and one of e luckiest day in the e arranges all im- y, and Miss Hozier edding should be on

that Mr. Churchill nd that he gained Liberalism. It was epted a place in the

a Saturday that he in 1890, where he n officer and as a n on a Saturday that mpaign against Mr. y reform, and it was y, that he completed lf and his old asso- candidate for the e-election and by af- of all parties must t a common foe.

## CHINAWOMAN

se woman physician, l years ago from the s returned to take a ns Hopkins. Miss the Methodist Epis- the city of Nanchang ad been forbidden e accomplished this ai Tao, the viceroy,