

SPECIMENS FROM THE COLLECTION OF CHINESE KITES AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. The attendant stands behind a "demon" kite.

A COLLECTION OF ORNAMENTED CHINESE KITES.

From the Land Where the Most Expert Kite Flyers in the World Exist—The Invention of the Device.

The new Asiatic and Chinese collection recently received at the American Museum of Natural History, and which will be shortly displayed to the public in one of the unopened west halls, contains many rare and interesting objects new to the eyes of the Western World. One of the most striking and spectacular features is a series of Chinese kites, lavishly ornamented, and constructed in the most astonishing and fanciful designs. The ordinary kite of the Yankee boy, with its primitive shape and plain surface, is a decidedly crude and insignificant contrivance alongside the scientific and gayly decorated productions handled by the Chinaman. These kites came from the vicinity of Peking.

They form a part of an extensive exhibit now being gathered from Eastern Asia by Dr. Berthold Laufer, a distinguished Oriental traveller and scholar, who is versed in the language and customs of Asiatic peoples. Through the generosity of Morris K. Jesup, esq., and several others, this special collection has been procured, the scope of which is designed to fully illustrate the everyday life, popular amusements, beliefs and industries of the Chinese; in fact, to thoroughly emphasize the general characteristics of their culture on a larger scale than hitherto attempted in this country. This is thought to be most opportune and necessary, in view of the increasing political intercourse and rapidly expanding commerce between our country and Eastern Asia.

Their great love of art, which pervades the whole life of the Chinese people, is most vividly portrayed in their kites. In their varied shapes, ranging from animal to human forms, they are at all times extremely picturesque, artistic in shape and brilliant in coloring. In height they vary from one to six feet. The frame is made of light bamboo sticks, across which is stretched heavy rice paper, on which is painted in showy colors the design or figure which the kite is intended to represent. The kite must always mean something to the Chinese mind, and is therefore emblematic in a way. Kites are also considered magical and symbolical of the human soul. They are made in the likeness of gods, famous warriors, butterflies, gigantic dragon flies, frogs, owls, fishes and mythological heroes. A special class of artisans, well up in the present and bygone beliefs of the people, arrange and create the innumerable designs of the kite.

The Chinese are the most expert kite flyers of the world, excelling their neighbors, the Japanese and Koreans, who likewise take considerable interest in this amusement. The kites used in these two latter countries are inferior in size, and are seldom ornamented. In China kite flying is a national pastime, and many thousands will assemble on the hills on certain holidays for the purpose of engaging in and witnessing this favorite sport. One of the principal kite flying occasions is on the ninth day of the ninth month, which is called the Festival of Ascending on High. Multitudes, old and young, throng to the open country, some carrying tiny kites a foot long, others huge, cross-shaped ones, taller than a man's head.

Probably the most extraordinary and fantastic of all the kites is the one representing the flying dragon, which plays such an important part in Chinese mythology. This is the record-breaking kite of the world, both in regard to length and its peculiar construction. When in flight it measures nearly forty feet. The front is composed of a ferocious head, having a wide mouth and protruding horns. The large eyes are formed of curved pieces of board, and are made to revolve, producing a loud humming sound in flight. Below the dragon head is a series of pasteboard disks, attached by a cord to bamboo sticks, a yard in length, running crosswise. The disks are about a foot in diameter, and are painted in black, red, yellow and white. The extreme tail portion is composed of silken strips or streamers. This remarkable aerial device is manipulated by a cord from the rear, while some distance below the kite three additional lines run to equal distant points to afford better control of the kite when in action. Seen in the air, with its pair of glaring and revolving eyes and serpentine motion, it produces a highly realistic picture of the mighty flying dragon of the upper world.

Another favorite shape for their kites is the large dragon fly. This is due to the deep rooted Buddhist belief of the return of the souls of the departed in various animal forms. Both in China and Japan dragon flies are thought to be used as winged steeds of the dead, selected to carry them and the spirits of their ancestors when they revisit their homes again. During the Festival of the Bon, which is composed of bonfires kindled in front of the houses to welcome the return of ghosts, the children are not allowed to molest or kill any dragon flies, particularly those who get into the family house. The warrior kites are made to attack and fight one another in the air by skillful manipulation of their strings, and money is freely staked on the result of these combats.

Dr. Stewart Cullen, of the Brooklyn Museum of Arts and Sciences, and recently curator of the Museum of Archaeology of the University of Pennsylvania, who is one of the best recognized authorities on Oriental games and sports, says that China is the original home of the kite, and states that a Chinese general, the founder of the Han Dynasty, invented the first kite about 195 B. C., and sent it up to measure the distance of the palace he intended to besiege and enter by digging a tunnel to terminate about the centre of the structure.

TENNYSON'S DISTRUST OF HIS SON.

"It seems to be the general opinion of the English press that Lord Tennyson, the eldest son of the poet laureate, has shown a self-denying and highly commendable spirit in agreeing to accept the post of Governor General of Australia, at a salary equivalent to about \$50,000," says "Leslie's Weekly." "Probably this is true as emoluments for public service are measured in England, but as the sum mentioned happens to be the stipend which we pay to the Chief Executive of our great and glorious republic, it looks like a fairly liberal allowance to Amer-

ican eyes. The present Lord Tennyson, it may be said, is considerably more than a son of his father, being himself a man of rare literary attainments, as well as a wise and able public administrator. He does not bear his father's Christian name, and only the family name of his father's friend, Arthur Hallam, and an anecdote goes with this which shows that the elder Tennyson, in the rôle of a fond father, was not so fond as to count overmuch on the life prospects of his first born. The historian asked at the christening: 'Why not give the child your own name as well as mine?' "For fear," replied Tennyson, 'for fear he should turn out a fool. Let his name be Hallam only.' "It is to be rejoiced at that the great poet's dread proved unfounded, and that his heir has even added a trifle of lustre to the family name."

TOO PRODUCTIVE AN AUTHOR.

Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Boston, told the other day this anecdote of his father: A prolific young novelist, whose works are now popular, once consulted his father regarding his health. "Perhaps," the young man said, after narrat-

ing his symptoms, "perhaps I write too much for my constitution."
"Not for your constitution," Dr. Holmes corrected him. "For your reputation."

A HOME THRUST.

"Jerome S. McWade," said Becker T. Washington, "seemed to me, when I was a boy, to be the smartest colored man in the world."
"Jerome was a slave. He lived in Virginia, at Hale's Ford. One day he appeared in a red velvet waistcoat, and straightway he was seized and taken to the office, for this waistcoat was the master's property. The master had worn it on his wedding day."
"Well, Jerome managed to prove that he had not stolen the waistcoat. Calhoun Hamilton had stolen it, and Jerome had bought it from Calhoun for a small sum."
"Now, Jerome," the master said, 'I admit you're not a thief, but you're a receiver of stolen property, and that's just as bad.'
"No, no, sir," said Jerome. "No, no. That is not just as bad, by any means."
"Why isn't it just as bad?" said the master.
"Because you wouldn't receive stolen goods yourself, sir, if it was bad."
"What do you mean? Me a receiver of stolen goods? Explain yourself," the master commanded.
"Why, sir," said Jerome, 'you bought and paid for me, the same as I bought and paid for that red waistcoat. Well, wasn't I stolen, same as the waistcoat was? Wasn't I stolen out of Africa?'"

SINGING IN EARS HEARD OUTSIDE.

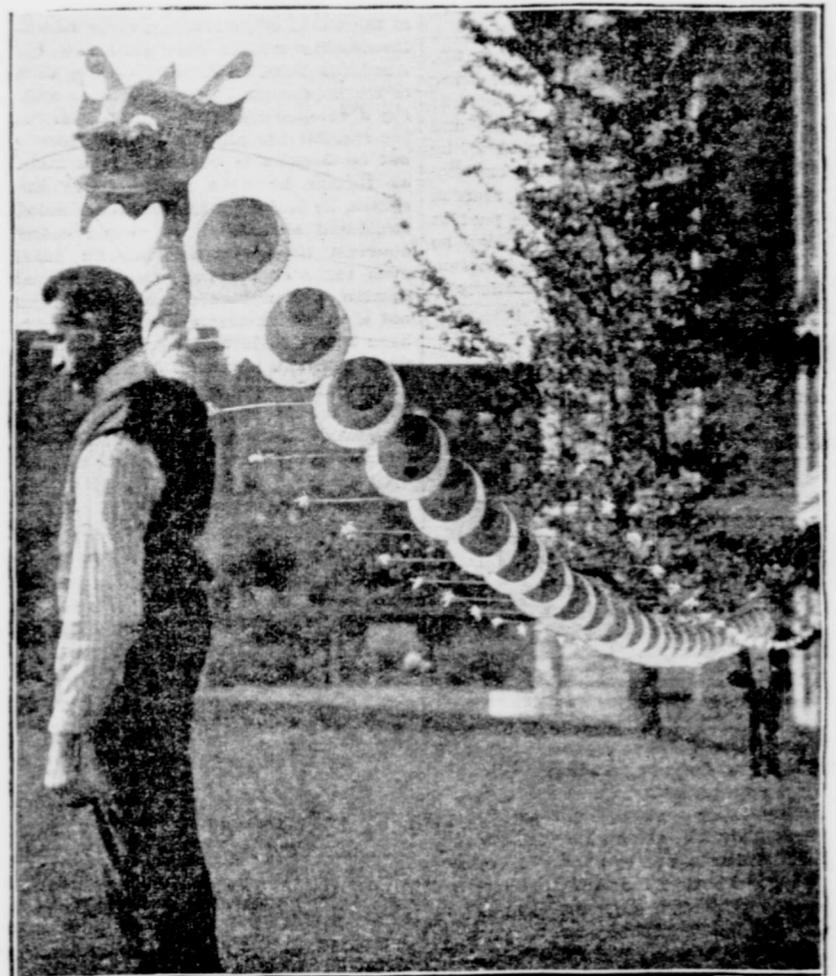
Clarence H. Mackay recently swore off at Roslyn, Long Island, a tax assessment of \$150,000.
Mr. Mackay is noted in Paris as a raconteur, and while he waited in Roslyn to take the oath he told a story to the tax officers.
"I have an Irish groom in my stables," he said. "The other day this groom and I were looking at some bull terriers in one of the harness rooms, when I heard an odd, an indefinable, sound."
"Pat, what is that noise?" said I.
"Shure, sir," says Pat, 'it's the singin' in me ears. I've been a-hearin' of it now for six months or more.'"

A YOUTHFUL COLONEL.

Miss May Goelet, whose engagement to the Duke of Roxburghe has been announced, is as welcome in English as in American society. It is customary in the royal family and among its branches to bestow honorary military titles upon children. Thus a boy who cannot yet walk may be a captain, and a youngster not yet in knickerbockers may be a colonel.
At an English country house one of these distinguished youngsters—a colonel—was staying, and Miss Goelet was among the guests. One morning, from the direction of the nursery, a tremendous caterwauling was to be heard.
"What is that dreadful noise?" some one asked.
"That," said Miss Goelet, smiling, "is only the colonel crying for his porridge."

THEIR GAIN—NOT OURS.

First Theatregoer—This play was taken from the Italian.
Second Ditto—Lucky Italians!—(Smart Set.)



A CHINESE DRAGON KITE EXTENDED ON THE MUSEUM LAWN