The Last Haunt Of "Shanghai"

BY FRANK T. BULLEN.

MANY people will wonder what the curious verb converted from a noun of place which ends the title of this article may import, and why the name of the principal treaty port of China should have passed into a verb at all. As to the latter I frankly confess ignorance, unless it was for the obvious reason that the abominable practice known as shanghaiing there first assumed anything like great proportions. But when we come to the meaning of the verb I am at once on familiar ground and find explanation exceedingly easy. In the boldest sense shanghaiing is to the merchant service what the press-gang used to be to the navy. That is in its effect upon the sufferers. But whereas the abominable system of the press-gang had all the force of law behind it, and the pressed man might be seized anywhere, kidnaped while engaged in his lawful occupations or indeed wherever he might be found, shanghaiing was always illegal and only flourished where law either did not exist or where, as in America, its operations were (and are) capricious and entirely unreliable.

The mode of operations of those engaged in this truly diabolical traffic were simplicity itself. (I say were because although the practice is still carried on, it is hardly as crude in its methods as it used to be). A so-called boarding master, that is a ruffian who kept a boarding house for seamen, received a commission to procure for an outward bound ship a certain number of sailors. For each one he would demand a certain sum, but that sum by no means satisfied his desire for gain. The ostensible contract with the seaman specified that he was to receive a certain portion of his wages, usually two months, in advance. Now seamen being proverbially foolish and easily led, it was seldom difficult to lure them to the boarding house, generally with the promise of drink, give them in that drink a powerful opiate, and then convey them on board the vessel, receive their advance notes under any pretext or none, forge their signature or mark to the ship's articles and retire. When the victim returned to consciousness he would be far, far at sea and compelled to make the best of his very bad bargain.

This was the simplest form of shanghaiing as carried on in American ports. Occasionally, of course, a sober seaman was encountered who did not desire drink and who being quite aware of the system was anxious to have nothing to do with either the boarding master or his myrmidons. In their righteous anger at such recalcitrancy these worthies never hesitated to use such force as they deemed necessary to reduce the seaman to unconsciousness, secure in the knowledge that he was powerless to retaliate against the overwhelming force they brought against him, and certain of their immunity from legal interference, since, as they boasted, both police and judges were in their pay. The well-organized shanghai boarding house was situated over the water, and when business was brisk it was no uncommon thing for Jack to be met in the street and invited inside to have a drink, be stunned, dropped through a trapdoor into a boat, and taken off toward a ship, all within the space of half an hour.

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A step farther in the business was one only brought to perfection in such places as Callao, San Francisco and Portland, Ore. A ship would arrive from over seas, her crew having probably several months' wages due to them. No sooner was she at anchor than she was boarded by a gang of ruffians who, utterly ignoring the master and officers, went forward and invited the crew to leave the ship, telling them of course how high the wages were out of the port. Of course liquor was freely tendered in order that compliance might be easy. But if poor Jack felt disinclined to leave his ship, thinking perhaps of his hardly earned wages and knowing the unsavory reputation of the port, other methods were instantly resorted to. Revolvers were produced and the hapless crew, terrorized into submission, were literally driven over the side, their clothes hastily scrabbled together and flung after them and away they went—to find themselves reshipped probably the same night on board of some other vessel with two months' advanced wages in the hands of the boarding master. The ship they had been stolen from would be supplied in the same way, and so the merry little game went on.

But it may well be asked, why did not the crews or at least the officers resist such infamous treatment, quite equal to the worst slave-raiding or even piracy. Well, principally because in these great ports of the land of the free and the home of the brave such unmentionable ruffians formed a close corporation and it was practically certain that any such resistance, especially if any hurt to the pirates resulted, would be followed by an organized raid upon the ship or attack upon the officers going ashore on business, and murder would probably result. This is no fancy sketch, but a faint outline of what went on until a few years ago with the connivance of the police and judges, a pleasing commentary upon the blessed state of things in this much-vaunted free country. Many and bitter were the complaints made by the masters and owners about this scandalous state of affairs, but the villains merely laughed and went on their way rejoicing. There were not wanting, either, evil masters of ships, who for a share in the plunder aided the boarding master in his villainies, but the number of them were happily very few.

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Now in this explanation of shanghaiing I fear I may have been thought forgetful of the title of my article. But indeed I do not see how it was possible to deal with the matter in any other way, since for the average reader the whole affair is wrapped in mystery. However, coming to the central point of my article; the last home of "shanghai" is the thriving port of Portland, Ore. This is without controversy among seamen who know and any one who cares to investigate the facts may do so in the blue book dealing with the causes of desertion by merchant seamen aboard. When, however, we come to the reasons why this vile business should still survive in Portland, having been practically stamped out everywhere else, we find some difficulty. Only the same difficulty though which confronts every student of American politics when dealing with particular cities even in the same state. Nowhere in the civilized world does the personal element count for so much in the character of cities as it does in the United States of America. Law apparently counts for nothing, unless there are to be found men bold enough and brave enough to administer it, and this I think accounts for the reason why San Francisco is fairly purged of the shanghai boarding master and his impost of blood money, and why Portland, Ore., still remains under this shameful ban. In the former place the city officials have, under pressure from Washington, risen and grappled with the evil effectively, in the latter there is yet no sign that any officer of the law cares to come into active collision with these murderous men-stealers.

Callao, which once held the bad eminence among shanghai ports, has lost it mainly because of the dying out of the sailing ship which indeed still comes to the Chincha Islands for guano, but does not trouble Callao. The steamship does not lend itself to the practice of shanghaiing, voyages being too short and wages on a fairly equable level. San Francisco and Portland, Ore., are the last two ports where sailing vessels may still be met with in any numbers, and consequently it is to them we must look for any lingering traces of the old romantic (?) practice of stealing men from one ship to man another, or on a pinch of sandbagging a respectable citizen and making it possible for him to find himself some fine morning one of the foremast hands in the Zephaniah D. Slocum bound for Liverpool, where an order is preceded by a kick to awaken the dormant faculties.

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Portland is a place of which her citizens may well be proud. It lies in the midst of a magnificently fertile country, full of splendid timber, growing amazing quantities of wheat, and on the lordly Willamette river, abounding in salmon. Also it is the most northerly port in the United States on the Pacific coast. After it comes the territory of the Britisher, British Columbia and Vancouver Island, where, at any rate, there is law and steady administration thereof. Portland is booming—shouting, in fact—but, in spite of its natural advantages, there are still a few little matters requiring adjustment, and one of them is certainly the administration of the law. It is no figure of speech to say that if you have only money enough and a sufficient pull with the police you may do whatever you like in Portland, and, whisper it gently, anywhere else in God's own United States, as her citizens modestly call it.

In bare justice, however, to Portland it should be said that she suffers from an influx of those least desirable citizens who prey upon sailors and have been driven out of San Francisco. In a better governed community, of course, they would be rounded up and sentenced to be hanged, for all of them are candidates for the honor, or serve long terms of imprisonment. But Portland is too busy making money and megaphoning the tale of her amazing virtues and powers to the attendant winds, and she has no time or inclination to attend to this plague spot in her midst. And so the sailor still suffers—is still bought and sold like a sheep in the shambles, still says "here" when the United States official causes him to be mustered at the capstan before the ship sails and puts the canonical questions to him which let him refuse to answer or misanswer if he dare. Only in fairness let it be admitted that Jemmy the Turk or his prototype no longer dare go aboard of an incoming ship and, revolver in hand, chase her crew over the side into his boat to sell them again next tide. No; he must needs now employ his powers of persuasion, backed by a little liquor, the law being powerless, apparently, to keep him out of a ship where he is not wanted, as his like (but far less potentially harmful) have been long kept out of homeward-bound ships at home.

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And now let me wind up with a little reminiscence of the good old days of shanghaiing, which should be of interest to all who love the sea and the good-natured fools who live upon it. The Monarch, British ship, has just arrived in Portland from New Zealand in ballast. She is a good ship, and her crew, half British, half aliens, are very well contented with her, for she is well found and they have been well treated always. Moreover, the pay is fairly good. She has come to Portland in ballast to load wheat for London and is duly towed up to her berth at the wharves. She is hardly fast before a horde of ruffians board her, and, swaggering into the forecastle, produce bottles, saying: "Here, Johnny, take a holt o' that; hain't had nawthin' but lime juice for a long spell, I bet." The invitation works—indeed, it may be relied on—and presently, when the mate or "bosun" sings out, "Clear up decks!" the newcomers have much difficulty in restraining the indignant sailors from rushing out and assaulting them. Presently, behold a line of swaying men, bag on back, making for the gangway, shepherded by the visitors. Accosted by the officers as to their destination, the visitors proxy for their remarks that this is a free country, and, anyhow, no lime juicers have got anything to say in it. In which laudable sentiment he would be upheld by 99 per cent of his fellow citizens engaged in similar illegal occupations.

A wagon is waiting, and the deserters, who are leaving their pay and all comfort behind and don't care, enter therein. Arriving at the boarding house, there are more bottles and cigars—did you ever see a sailor with a cigar? Then a drunken sleep and another passage, more swift than the last, to where the Gemsbok, a big Yank, is waiting for her crew. Her four officers are "heeled" with revolver and knuckleduster, and no sooner is the crew on board and the farce of the United States commissioner at the capstan gone through than the breaking in of the crew begins.

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Great heavens! are these white English-speaking men who can dash a fellow white man to the deck, kick him, jump on him until he is senseless and yet call themselves men, citizens of a great, free republic? Oh, yes, in America. And remember that these outrages are always perpetrated at about four to one, to say nothing of the inequality in weapons. America is a land from which has been eliminated the word fair-play and its meaning. It is a land of cowardly and brutal assaults upon unprotected men, and nowhere is this more evident than on board ship.

Well, this kind of treatment brings our shanghaiied crew to their senses. They now learn for what they have exchanged their British pay and privileges, and incidentally are made fully conversant with the conjugation of the verb "to shanghai," a word which they have often lightly used before, but never realized the inner meaning of. They find themselves bereft of all their precious hard earnings and working now under conditions quite as evil as those of any slave at any period of the world's history, with about two-thirds of their pay already in the pockets of the brave American citizens, the confederates of the officials of law and order, who have thus used them. Blame the poor fellows if you will for being fools (but really they were scarcely able to help themselves), but ask the earnest question, How do American citizens, with all their brag about their free institutions, endure that a great American city shall be the last home of shanghai? Have they no shame?

The Sunday Star's PRIZE AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTEST

FIRST PRIZE
GRACE ROSS
44 R. ST. N.E.

THIRD PRIZE
WM. S. ADAMS
1839 N. CAPITOL ST.

SECOND PRIZE
CHAS. F. CAIN
514½ H. ST. N.E.

Winners of Prizes.

"The Country in Springtime" was the subject of The Sunday Star's amateur photographic contest for last week. The prizes were awarded as follows:

First Prize, $5.00:
Miss Grace Ross, 44 R street northeast — In Rock Creek Park.

Second Prize, $3.00:
Charles F. Cain, 14½ K street northeast—May on the Farm.

Third Prize, $2.00:
Wm. S. Adams, 1839 North Capitol street—The Apple Orchard.

DISCOVERS THAT SOCIETY WOMEN HAVE BRAINS

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LONDON, May 3, 1906.

ONE of the most brilliant discoveries said to have been made by Dr. Emil Reich, the Hungarian savant, who has suddenly become the social fad in London, is that society women have brains—lots of brains. This sensational conclusion is the result of duchesses, countesses and titled personages, American and English, who crowded to Claridge's to hear the learned doctor indulge in all sorts of up-to-date philosophy, more or less apropos of Plato—for, while the duchesses listen to the doctor the doctor studies the duchesses with a shrewd and twinkling eye.

I hastened to the book-lined study of his modest home in Notting Hill for verification of the rumors of his great discovery, and have his personal assurance that it is indeed a fact.

"Yes, it is quite correct," said Dr. Reich, laughing, as he passed his cigarette case and leaned back in his easy chair in a chatty attitude, "and you may say for me that not only have society women plenty of brains, but in many cases they are the intellectual superiors of men. This may especially be said of American women, but it applies with equal force to English women as well. Of course, the attitude of the women in the respective countries is entirely different. For instance," he continued, "the American woman thinks only of herself—of herself—and, of herself. To her man is a mere writer of checks, a getter of money for her to spend, as she thinks fit, on her personal adornment, her social upbuilding or her ambition. She patronizes and tolerates the man merely because she needs him in her business, but otherwise he is no more in her thoughts than any other object created and invented for her special advantage.

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"But, however we may judge the American woman or her English cousin, we cannot get away from the fact that both of them have very superior intellects; only differing in their individual point of view. Judging the American society woman from my personal contact with her, from a residence of some years in that country, I would say that the American woman of today resembles the Roman matrons of old, who cared only for themselves, and nothing for their husbands or country. The American woman does not care for children, or the family; she wishes to avoid the duties of the mother, and men are to her, as I have said again and again, nothing but a means to an end—and that end her own aggrandizement. With all her ambition, however, the American woman is not a superior woman by any means, as compared to women of other countries. All American women have dreams of being wealthy, and no matter how poor they are, should their husbands 'strike luck' they immediately begin to put on side and make a great show.

"This is not the case with women of other nationalities. The English and French women are more domestic; they love their homes, their husbands, their children. They do not have dreams of ambition such as the American women indulge in, and if the French or English women's husbands suddenly became immensely wealthy it does not effect a radical, overwhelming change in the women themselves. But all American women—no matter how poor they are—are potentially the same. Give them the chance to be rich, and they cannot resist showing their true colors.

"Where the American woman shows her superiority over women of other nationalities, particularly the English, is her splendid personal physique. It is an immense asset and wins for her many conquests. The American woman commands more respect, and deference and respect are to her what ozone is to the breathing apparatus. With these immense assets to her credit, the American woman spoils everything by her overwhelming love of sensation and personal ambition.

"Women in America have more brain power than men, and it is from the American women that I look some day for the great American poet."

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Dr. Reich was asked to explain how he came to make the really original discovery that society women had more brains than men; or any brains at all, for that matter.

"Well," he replied, laughing, "I made it a point to study women, especially with a view to ascertaining wherein this intellectuality—this mental superiority—consisted. Women are to me—and I say it with respect and deference, and would not wish to be misunderstood—women are to me what insects are to the entomologist. One insect may have a certain stripe on its wing case which another does not possess. The entomologist examines that stripe, measures its length and classifies its owner—without passion, or bias, or prejudice, or emotion.

"For myself, I study the woman from her intellectual side. My investigation is purely objective—unprejudiced; I care nothing for nationality, caste or color.

"Pursuing my studies on these scientific lines, what do I find? You say it is marvelous to discover that society women have any brains at all. Perhaps. But it is to me still more marvelous how people have gone on from generation to generation giving all the credit to men, and—with the exception of the American men—making the 'weaker sex' take an inferior place.

"Especially is it true in England that women have always been supposed to be entirely on a lower plane than men. The average Englishman looks upon woman as his inferior, and he regards her with pity and condescension. He looks at her as a beautiful imbecile—nothing more nor less.

"As a matter of fact," continued Dr. Reich, speaking with his characteristic torrential flow of words, "I have discovered that women in England—and society women at that—not only have as much intellectual force as men, what you might call mere brain power—but they have several characteristics which make them immeasurably superior to men in every respect. For instance, men are wonderfully formalistic and authority ridden. Men believe in nothing but precedent; they are averse to novelty, overconservative and especially specialistic. In every line of thought a man bullds up for himself one standard, to which everything else must conform. In biology he looks to and swears by Darwin; in English history, Green and Herbert Spencer; and it takes a man twenty-five years to recognize, in any one of these lines, the advent of a new force.

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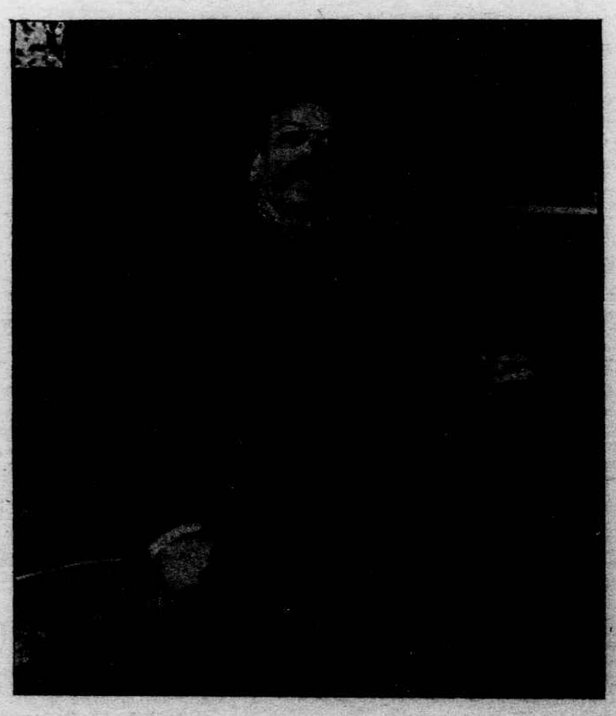
"Now with women—and I speak of the intelligent society women—they display far more intellectual nimbleness—more flair—judgment, intuition, initiative—are far less prejudiced, and far quicker to recognize merit as soon as it presents itself. Women have far more esprit than men. And this last quality is one of the reasons why the men hate them."



DR. EMIL REICH.

"Could you give some instances of women's actual superiority, doctor?" I asked hurriedly, slipping the query in edgeways.

"Well, take literary style," he replied quickly. "Women in England write far better prose than men. Mrs. Browning's Portuguese sonnets have never been equaled by anything written by man. In prose the Englishman writes heavy, cumbersome, unequal stuff; whereas, if you take the trouble to look into any woman's paper of the day, you will find really excellent writing, far better than anything a man could do."

"How do you account for this?" I asked.

"Because, as a rule, in England," replied the doctor, "women are far better linguists than men. They are good French scholars, while numbers of them have a command of Italian and German. Women in England are not only better educated than the men, but they have more leisure. Not going into business and forgetting all their schooling as men do, they have more opportunity to improve themselves."

"What inference is to be drawn from this female superiority? Where will it lead?" I asked.

"If women continue to advance with the same rate of progress they are now exhibiting," replied Dr. Reich, "their position in a few years will be immensely superior to what it has ever been in the past. In England it will not be many years before men will find they have to take the supposedly 'weaker sex' very seriously. Otherwise the men may find themselves some day entirely outclassed and incapable of holding their own beside their women companions.

"I predict for society women a great future—if they will only use the brains they undoubtedly possess. They should make up their minds to study more genuine philosophy, and leave off seeking to be thrilled by every new 'ism' that comes along. Society women all over the world are always on the lookout for a new shiver; and yet they seem to recognize that these novelties have nothing lasting in them—nothing worth while."

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"What do you think they should do," I asked, "in order to retain the superiority they now possess over men?"

"They should interest themselves more in real philosophy; society women need genuine philosophy. I would recommend that they should read and study Plato, the Banquet first; then the Republic; the Dialogues, Theaetetus, Philebus and the rest. They should also study Schopenhauer. They need not trouble about his pessimism, but they should learn all he has to say on psychology, his theory of art, his criticism of life. A very good book for society women to read would be Ferrier's 'Lectures on the History of Philosophy.'"

"Do you consider the American woman capable of achieving anything along philosophic lines?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed," replied the doctor; "the American woman could do a great deal if she would only rid herself of her tremendous febrility; her desire for sensationalism is her greatest obstacle to success. If the American woman would tone this down there is no reason why a great future would not open out for her also. She has immense advantages in physical beauty, which gives her a decided superiority over English women. The American woman has such splendid health and such a fine physique that if she were mentally cultivated she would be a very splendid type of woman. American women should be better linguists than they are. It is very seldom that you find an American woman who knows any other language but her own."

The personal history of Dr. Reich is even more interesting than his views on life and society. Commanding today audiences made up of persons of title and the highest ranks of English intellectuals, there was a time—and that not many years ago—when he was alone and almost destitute in the world. He arrived in London from Paris after his marriage with only a few shillings in his pocket, and not a letter or a line of introduction to any one.

It was just at that time that England and America were having a dispute over the Venezuelan affair, and, as Dr. Reich was a good Spanish scholar, it occurred to him to prepare an article on the Venezuelan question from original Spanish documents at the British Museum. He sent his article to the London Times, and, to his surprise, it was published over his signature, occupying more than a whole page in that august publication. On the same date the Times published a leading editorial commenting on Dr. Reich's able article.

This piece of clever literary work attracted the attention of the British colonial office, and he was sent for and consulted as to many important matters in connection with the law and history of the case, being paid handsomely for his labors.

The Times article and the government employment put the plucky savant on his feet, and he looked about him for new worlds to conquer. It occurred to him that he would like to deliver a series of lectures at Oxford University, and he called upon the head of the faculty with that object.

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"My dear sir," said that austere personage, with a deprecatory wave of the hand, "we are literally surfeited with lectures—we could not possibly spare you a hall at Oxford."

"Could you give me a few moments of your time now?" persisted Dr. Reich.

"Certainly; an hour, if you like," was the reply. It led to the making of Dr. Reich. There and then, with his wonderful gift of extemporizing, the doctor delivered a lecture on Greek and Roman law that so interested the university don that he at once agreed to put the largest hall at Dr. Reich's disposal; and the subsequent lectures were a very brilliant success—indeed, the sensation of the season.

From this well-founded base—a series of Oxford lectures—Dr. Reich soon found no difficulty in making headway in other directions, and, before very long, he was in great demand for lectures on scientific, historical, political, social and other subjects. His mind seems to be more or less universal, and he has a wonderful fund of information on almost every conceivable topic.

From a position of almost penury, he made his way up, by dint of hard work, to a position of practical affluence, as it is said that his income today from his various books, lectures and other writings verges on to $15,000 per annum.

Dr. Reich is a broad-shouldered man, somewhat below the medium height; his forehead is square and very "musical," his manner characteristic of famous composers. His head is well shaped and massive, while the pince-nez he wears gives him a distinguished appearance. His home life appears to be a very happy one, as he has a devoted wife who believes in and recognizes his genius, and a charming young daughter of twelve years. His stepson—he married a widow—acts as his secretary; and altogether it may be said that Dr. Reich seems to be a philosopher who applies his theories to his daily life, and who has found the secret of personal happiness. Incidentally he is a brilliant pianist—a pupil of Liszt—but he never plays in public.

W. B. NORTHROP.

Literary Matters Abroad

Special Correspondence of The Star.

LONDON, May 3, 1906.

ENGLISH publishers, who are always complaining of hard times, must have read with envy of the profits realized by a French confrere of theirs, M. Adolph Boudesque, whose case was reported from Paris recently. M. Boudesque's career, it is true, has just been cut short by the French courts, but while it lasted—which means for the last five years or more—he must have made more money out of the publishing business than anybody ever did before—at least more in proportion.

For although Boudesque published only one book, and only one copy of that every year, the proceeds from it were over one hundred thousand francs, or $25,000 annually, which must be a record. The volume was called by its publisher, "The Great Golden Book of Courage and Devotion," which sounds eminently virtuous as well as impressive, but the courts decided that the goodly sum which it netted for Boudesque every year was obtained under false pretenses, and hence it is that that worthy has been ordered to cease publishing it, and meanwhile, to hold himself at the disposition of justice. Boudesque has appealed against this sentence, however, for he declares that he is a reputable citizen, and that he merely took a pardonable advantage of the well-known fondness of the public for being gulled.

According to the evidence given at his trial, M. Boudesque kept a sharp eye out for announcements to the effect that So-and-So had received the Cross of the Legion of Honor, the Academic Palms or the Order of Agricultural Merit. When he saw one he immediately wrote, congratulating the happy recipient, and asked if he would not like to have his name inscribed in the "Great Golden Book," which, according to its publisher, constituted a unique roll of the world's heroic sons. The cost of such inscription was thirty francs, or $6.

Boudesque added that the mightiest personages of the political world were on his "committee of honor." So they were, for he had put their names upon it himself without consulting them about it. However, his little game worked, for most of the persons to whom he wrote, in the flush of their joy at being decorated, sent the thirty francs demanded, and the fact that Boudesque gathered in over a hundred thousand francs last year is eloquent testimony to the great number of persons in France who receive one or another kind of decoration.

The astute "publisher" tripped, however, when he recently sent one of his communications to an employe of the prefecture of police, for this individual not only declined to be inscribed in the "Great Golden Book," but called the attention of the authorities to that volume, and so Boudesque was arrested. And sentenced, too, as above stated, despite his assertion that he didn't swindle any one, because he never promised to send them the book, but only to write their names in the one which he kept at home.

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If Count Lionel di Minerbi of Trieste, who has just bought the beautiful Palazzo Rezzonico, in Venice, is interested in literary matters he probably will take a special pleasure in his new home on account of its intimate associations with Robert Browning. For here it was, of course, that the great poet came on a visit to his son and daughter-in-law in 1889, and here that a few months afterward he died of an illness contracted while under their roof, tended to the last by loving hands, and with echoes of the success of "Asolando" coming from England. Until recently the palace contained many relics of both Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and many American visitors to Venice saw these every year, but they were all removed before the sale of the palace to Count di Minerbi.

The Rezzonico palace, for which this Austrian nobleman is said to have paid $140,000, was built from the designs of Longhena in the seventeenth century, and contains a fine ceiling by Tiepolo, besides boasting one of the finest and largest bedrooms in all Venice. The rooms in its entresol, which are known as the "pope's apartments"—from Eugenious IV, who was a member of the Rezzonico family—are also interesting to all travelers on account of their beautiful decorations, and especially so to Americans and English folk on account of the fact that it was in these rooms some two years ago that Mrs. Humphrey Ward wrote the chapters in the "Marriage of William Ashe," of which the scenes are laid in Venice.

Easily Answered.

From the Philadelphia Press.

"Now," said the teacher, "suppose your father gave your mother a $5 note to take out $2.75 for herself and return to him the balance, what would be left?"

"Pop," promptly replied Tommy Tuff.