

Iron County Register.

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, MISSOURI.

THE STORY OF A STAND PIPE

By Charles Moreau Harger.

SIX MEN in this country make a business—a profession, they call it—of cleaning and painting standpipes. The tall, columnlike reservoirs that hold the water supplies of many towns and small cities and furnish the pressure for the mains of the streets, lawns and residences. The vocation is not crowded, partly because the standpipes are not numerous or often cleaned, but especially because of the peril attending the task.

Of the half dozen, James Wert has probably come nearest death and survived. I crawled through a water-main hole at the base of a standpipe on which this work was being done the other day. Once inside, it seemed like the bottom of a hundred-foot iron-walled well. Far above gleamed a circle of blue sky, with now and then a bit of cloud crossing it. Swinging at the end of a rope 90 feet above the iron floor of the standpipe was the painter, his wheels on a dolly, and he was carefully filling it from a bucket of waterproof black paint that dangled beside him. He whistled as he worked, and the sound came roaring down the huge tunnel like the scream of a locomotive.

He drew himself higher and higher until he reached the dizzy rim and looked out over the tallest buildings and spires of the town. Then he loosened the rope, and it whirred through the pulleys as he came swiftly down.

"Scare you?" he remarked, as he alighted safely and refilled his bucket. "No danger in this. I've been doing it for four years and never got hurt. Jim did, though—he's my partner."

Then he told me about it. "Jim always liked children; he had none of his own, and was forever taking up with them in towns where he worked. For my part I don't think this is the place for 'em. You see, we stay a week or two in a place, according to how long the standpipes have gone without cleaning—and some towns are mighty careless about fixing such things. We usually go together, but one day the company we were working for got orders to repair two pipes the same week, and we separated.

"Jim went out to a prairie town in eastern Kansas. The standpipe was the highest in the state and had not been cleaned and painted inside for six years, so the job was a long one.

"Jim settled down at a good boarding house and put his money and package of gold leaf in the village bank. We always carry along some gold leaf to gild a church cross if we get a chance. There is from \$50 to \$200 in a job of that kind, for there ain't many that want it. Then he went to work on the standpipe.

The water was drawn out, and he began to scrape the rusty iron work inside, putting it in shape for the two coats of paint he was to give it later on. Every day there were a lot of boys gathered around to see him work. They stopped as they came home from school and crawled through the main at the bottom inside the pipe—just as you have this morning. Jim always let 'em do it. I don't like it, but maybe he was right in it that time.

"Of course there were a lot of men that came, too, but they only came from curiosity, and one trip was enough. They didn't come back. But the boys were there every day, especially one of them—Frank Smith by name was. He used to sit for an hour at a time watching the sky at the top and hollering questions up at Jim as he was painting.

"The first coat was put on easily, and then the second was begun. This is a kind of rubber paint that the water will not hurt, and it is slow work, as we have to paint it rather thick. Jim wanted to quit Saturday night and join me on a church-steeple job that we had found down in St. Louis, and he was putting in every minute of his time to finish the second coat.

"It is one of our rules not to work when there is a storm, but out on the prairie so many of them are flying around that it is hard to tell when there is danger. One afternoon in April the sky was filled with scattering shower clouds, and there was a brisk breeze blowing that might mean anything from a drought to a tornado. Jim paid little attention to it, and painted away, with no sight of the sky except what was visible through the round top of the standpipe. You see for yourself that it is only a speck out of the big blue of the prairie sky.

"The manager of the waterworks plant was busy that afternoon and did not go out to look at the work; the town loafers, who had had their curiosity satisfied, cared nothing for it, and Jim was all alone. It must have been about three o'clock that the storm gathered in the northwest. It came up with a clean edge, as the western people say—that is, there were no clouds ahead of it, only clear sky and sunshine. But the storm itself was an ugly one. It had had and thunder in it and the people were anxious lest there might be too much wind as well. But cyclones don't come out of the northwest in the prairie states, and there wasn't any danger on that score.

"The first Jim knew of the storm was when the tossing, foam-like edge that races ahead of these western showers went over the top of the pipe. But he was painting half-way up the 100-foot wall, and not knowing the country, didn't think it meant anything. More clouds went over and then came a change of the wind that made the tall tower tremble and scared Jim at last. He tried to loosen his rope from the pulleys and go down, but before he did it there was a crash as if a hundred cannon had been let off at once. The folks of the town were all in their houses, and

when they heard it every one expected to see his roof come tumbling in. But it didn't. The lightning struck the standpipe. Now if it had been full of water nothing would have been hurt, but it was empty—and Jim was hanging inside it.

"It is hard to tell just what happened just then. For my part I think the smoke of the burning paint and the blaze of the lightning must have made it a mighty gorgeous spectacle, but there wasn't anybody there to see it but Jim—and he couldn't.

"He had a way of winding the ropes around his legs as he sat on his little swing board at the end of the long hanger and must have been swinging free from the iron walls when the stroke came. Then there was the thickness of rubber paint between him and the electricity, and altogether it didn't kill him. But it did something else—it shocked him so badly that he fell forward and hung in his gyp ropes, limp as a rag.

"I was telling you about the boys—well, they didn't show up that afternoon either, none of them but the Smith boy. He was going home from school when the storm broke and was right under a cottonwood tree across from the standpipe when the lightning struck. He was afraid to go on and thought that it would be safer in the pipe—he didn't know he was tempting fate that way. So he crawled down through the little hole at the bottom of the pipe and got inside. Looking up he saw Jim, swinging back and forth, limp and helpless, knowing nothing, and for all the boy could tell, he might be dead.

"It was raining cats and dogs outside by this time, just sheets of water and lots of it coming into the standpipe. The boy was afraid to go after help, for Jim might drop any minute, and to drop 50 or 60 feet on a sheet-iron floor with stone and concrete under it can't be done but once in this world.

Frank had watched the work so much that he knew how the ropes were fastened in the pulleys, and as one long rope always touches the bottom he could take it in his hand. He shook it and yelled, but Jim was clear gone and didn't answer. The rain was coming faster and faster, and the lightning was coming every half minute. The boy couldn't see but one way out of it, and he took the very way that would have been considered too dangerous by a grown man. I'd have been scared of it myself.

"He climbed the rope. Just think of it! He was right under the bucket of paint and Jim. Either might tumble on him any minute. Then the lightning was liable to strike the tower again, and that would mean trouble. But then he didn't know all this, and digging his toes into the laps of the sheet iron he pulled himself up hand-over-hand. He was wet to the skin and the rope was slippery, but he didn't give up. At last he was right under Jim's seat, and called to him, but it was no use—Jim was unconscious.

"The good angels protected him, I guess, or he couldn't have done what he did next. He pulled himself up to the seat and stood on either side of the man. Then he took the slack rope and tied it around Jim until there was less chance of a fall to the floor. Loosening the rope where it was wound around the paint hook to keep it from slipping, little by little he let himself and Jim down. It took a long time because he could use but little rope at once, and there was danger of the burden sending them downward too fast.

"They did fall at the last, but it so happened that they were only five feet up, and it did not hurt much. Three inches of water from the storm was on the bottom of the standpipe when they landed, and into it they splashed. The rain was still coming in, and between the storm and the water on the floor they got well soaked. It kept the boy from fainting, but it didn't do Jim any good.

"They dragged him out through the hole in the bottom of the standpipe and took him to the hotel after the boy had given the alarm.

"Then they sent for a doctor from the city, and for me. I nursed Jim for three weeks before he knew me. The doctor said he had enough electricity in his system to run a telegraph office, but that was an exaggeration. He couldn't have handled much more, though.

"Jim came to after awhile—the rubber paint was all that saved him, the paint and the boy. He couldn't do it again in a thousand times.

"Yes, he recovered, but I am alone in the business for a time. Jim's taking three months off to steady his nerves.

"The boy? Funny thing about that, I got a letter from him yesterday asking if I wouldn't take him as an apprentice standpipe painter and steeple gilding. You'd have thought he'd seen all of this business he wanted to—now, wouldn't you?"—Chicago Daily Record.

Getting His Money's Worth.
Strange (who had just visited a museum, to the custodian)—Here's two marks—you may give me back one mark.
Custodian (putting the coin in his pocket)—Sorry, but I haven't any change. Tell you what I'll do, though—I'll show you through the museum again.—Flegende Blaetter.

For Cold Weather.
It is reported that the German troops proceeding to China are being furnished with coats and boots lined with catkins.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

The Swiss cabinet consists of seven members, each of whom draws £480 per annum.

The public buildings of England alone are valued at a sum approaching £250,000,000.

English statistics show that of late there has been a large and rapidly growing importation of tomatoes. Tomatoes were but a short time ago an article of luxury in Great Britain, only used for the rich; but now they have become a common dish on the table of the working classes.

Criminal statistics just published in Germany reveal the fact that the most marked increase in crime is shown by the agricultural provinces rather than by those containing the industrial centers. It is an exclusive agricultural province on the eastern frontier which is the most criminal. The statistics, it is claimed, also show an increasing tendency to crime in the empire as a whole.

It is not generally known that in France it is a penal offense to give any form of solid food to babies under a year old, unless it be prescribed in writing by a properly qualified medical man. Nurses are also forbidden to use for their charges any sort of feeding bottle having a rubber tube. These and other equally stringent laws have recently been enacted by the French government to save the lives of babies.

How greatly the British government profits by death can be seen by the returns of the estate duties for 1899-1900, just issued. They show that nearly £14,000,000 (\$70,000,000) were added to the exchequer from this cause. The total amount bequeathed by 65,341 persons was more than £292,000,000 (\$1,460,000,000), or half the national debt. Twelve millionaires paid tolls to the amount of £2,600,000 (\$10,000,000).

WEATHER DEPARTMENT.

It Is Said Japan Has Brought It to a High State of Perfection.

One of the most surprising things observed by our fleet at Japan is the fine meteorological service of the Japanese government which has given us accurate forecasts for the guidance of naval vessels as they could have had at Hampton Roads. There are 900 stations in Japan which record temperature, wind velocity, rainfall, atmospheric pressure and electrical and earthquake conditions. Japan has an earthquake every day or so, and if the tremblings simply shake the people they pay no more attention to them than we do to a high wind. The Japanese have brought the seismograph, or earthquake recorder, to a high state of perfection. They showed this instrument in operation at the world's fair in Chicago, together with the self-recording pencils and charts that, by automatic machinery, note the direction, violence and duration of the earth's tremblings.

The Philippine islands, like Japan, are in a state of almost constant tremor, and the United States is preparing to make an extensive study of earthquakes in the Malay observatory and in stations throughout the islands. It has been found that the earthquake area of the far east extends from Kamshatka on the north to New Zealand on the south, passing through Japan, the Malayan islands and the Philippines, and following the line of a long narrow letter "S." The western side of all the islands are more liable to shocks than the eastern. In 1863 an earthquake at Manila shook down all the stone buildings of the Europeans. An equally severe shock was felt in 1880, but the houses had been rebuilt in a manner better adapted to resist the shock.

A knowledge of the weather and physical conditions of a locality is necessary in order to build a city that is to have some guarantee of enduring. Manila having earthquakes with her always is compelled to think of them, and so is barred from tall stone buildings, and Galveston must raise its level, and use stone and cement in its foundations as a defense against hurricanes.

AN ARCTIC NIGHT.

It Is the Most Wonderful Beautiful Thing That Exists, Says Nansen.

Nothing more wonderfully beautiful can exist than the arctic night. It is dreamland painted in the imagination's most delicate tints; it is a world of light that you cannot tell where one end and the other begins, says Nansen in his book, entitled "Farthest North."

No forms—it is all faint, dreamy color music, a far-away melody on muted strings. Give it brighter colors, and it is no longer beautiful. Over the ice fields there are cold violet blue shadows with lighter pink tints, where a ridge here and there catches the last reflection of the vanished day.

Up in the blue of the cupola shine the stars, speaking peace, as they always do.

In the south stands a large yellow moon encircled by a yellow ring, and light golden clouds floating on the blue background.

Presently the Aurora Borealis shakes over the vault of heaven its veil of glittering silver; it spreads, it contracts again, in restless change; next, it breaks into many-folded bands of shimmering silver, over which shoot billows of glittering rays, and then the glory vanishes. Presently it billows in tongues of flame over the zenith, and then it shoots a bright ray right up from the horizon, until the whole melts away in the moonlight, and it is as though one heard the sigh of a departing spirit.

Here and there are left a few waving streamers of light, vague as a foreboding—they are the dust from Aurora's glittering cloak.

But now it is growing again, new lightnings shoot up and the endless game begins afresh. And all this time this utter stillness, impressive as the symphony of infinitude.

To what end all this beauty with not a creature to rejoice in it? This is the coming earth—here are beauty and death. But to what purpose? Ah, what is the purpose of all these spheres? Read the answer, if you can, in the blue starry firmament.

CORRUPT FILIPINO JUDGES.

Administration of Justice a Purely Mercenary Affair in the Philippine Islands.

A recent dispatch from Manila says: The administration of Manila's civil courts by Filipino magistrates, which has long been scandalous, is now attracting public attention more than ever, and has been brought to the Taft commission's attention, with requests for ratification.

The courts are composed of four justices of the peace and four primary courts. The magistrates are all Filipinos, and developments have proved that the incumbents are utter failures as administrators of justice. The dissatisfaction with and complaints against the existing courts are increasing. Natives and foreigners dread litigation, knowing the facts in the case. Charges have been filed and every evidence is in the hands of the authorities which, it is claimed, will show that the magistrates have been guilty of the greatest corruption and malfeasance in office.

One magistrate was recently suspended on suspicion of criminal abuse of power and attempt to defraud. The monthly collection of fines of the four native justices is estimated at \$6,000. The amount collected by the primary courts for the same period is much greater. The eight magistrates persistently ignore the regulations established by the authorities for the supervision of commitments and the accountability of moneys. They deposit less than a hundred dollars monthly, and are alleged to appropriate the balance of their collections.

It is further claimed that the magistrates are in collusion with the native bench in compromising offenses on the basis of "cash for freedom," and that in many instances magistrates who committed men to jail over a year ago are now liberating them without trial, the explanation being the effectiveness of a habeas corpus and the designation of a special officer to investigate the cases, resulting in the freedom of many persons illegally committed as prisoners. It is said there are over 50 established instances where prisoners have bought their freedom from the guards conveying them between the courtroom and the jail.

Serious charges of favoritism have lately been made against the civil bench. The members of the supreme court are disgraced with the condition of the courts, and intend to substitute honest Americans from the United States for the native magistrates. Americans having a knowledge of Spanish are preferred, but they are the hardest to secure. The commission must therefore create the vacancies needed in the case of the entire judiciary.

WORKMEN AND THEIR TOOLS.

Many of the Labor-Saving Devices Used in America Unknown Elsewhere.

A Russian architect who is traveling in this country to study American building methods was greatly interested in the elevator which he saw used for raising brick in the construction of a great apartment house, says the Youth's Companion. He even photographed the device, in order that he might have visual evidence of it to show on his return home. In his country is in use the primitive one of carrying them aloft on the shoulders of men.

Such incidents are of common occurrence. Many of the labor-saving devices in use in America are unknown elsewhere. Our own countrymen traveling in Europe, and more especially in Asia, are astonished at the slow and toilsome methods there employed.

A failure to make use of labor-saving contrivances is not always due to lack of enterprise. Many of the inventions useful to us "would not pay" where labor is cheap. Efforts to introduce the trolley car for passenger and freight traffic in the West Indies encountered an obstacle which the American promoters had not foreseen. The ten cents for which the company would carry a package five miles is more—a rate that would insure generous patronage here, did not seem small there, for the simple reason that many a native could find no easier way to earn ten cents than by walking the five miles and carrying the package on his head.

If a workman is known by his ships, he is also known by his tools. High-priced men do their work with high-priced machinery. The engineer of the mammoth locomotive which is pulling hundreds of people across country in a fast express train is well paid; the poor oriental, dragging his single passenger in a jinrikisha, gets barely enough for his support. Not only does the high-priced worker create the necessity for mechanical improvements, but the mechanical improvements in turn augment productivity.

The lesson, then, for nations and for individuals is to make themselves worthy of good tools. Human muscles were made for something better than the work which a few lumps of coal under a boiler will do more easily.

A Chinese Fable.

Here is a Chinese fable with a moral. A sparrow had its nest half-way up a tree, in the top of which dwelt a monkey. After a heavy rain the sparrow, snug and dry in its warm nest, saw the monkey shaking his dripping body, and could not refrain from addressing him thus: "Comrade, your hands are skillful, your strength great, your intellect clever; why do you live in such a miserable state? Why not build a snug nest like mine?" The monkey, angered at the complacency of the sparrow, replied: "Am I to be mocked by an evil creature like you? Your nest is snug, is it? and so saying, he threw the nest to the ground. Moral: Don't talk with a passionate man.—London Mail.

A Sad Case.

Mrs. Hogan—That little sphalpana as a Jerry Horgan must be a bad penny entirely.

Mrs. Duggan—Phwy? "Shure, he's bin th' manes av makin' his poor wife a confirmed husband-bater."—Puck.

Could Take a Joke.

Barber (absently)—Shampoo, sir. Customer (with shining bald pate)—No.—shin!—Puck.

The Only Thing.

Edythe—Don't you think that character is a young man's everything? Ethel—Oh, yes; if he has nothing else.—Puck.

PHYSIQUE OF THE ENGLISH.

Signs of Deterioration Remarkable by Americans in Great Britain—Recent Official Report.

According to an official report recently made lung diseases have increased 60 per cent. among the seamen of the British navy since 1883 in spite of the fact that they are now much less exposed to the weather than they were formerly. This fact, in connection with other points that cannot fail to strike an American who makes any stay in Great Britain, suggests the question, Is the English race going downhill physically?

Formerly Americans heard and read a great deal about the robust health and fine physique of English people, particularly English women. They were told English women could outwalk, outskate, outrow and generally outdo their American sisters in every form of physical exercise. Until within a few years comparatively it has been taught as orthodox belief that English athletes of every type excelled American young men in strength and muscle.

The American who lands in England, therefore, expects to encounter a rosy, robust, well-grown, well-developed race. He is disappointed. Perhaps a regiment of British soldiers will attract his attention among the first objects he perceives. As to uniform and drill they are probably the neatest, neatest fellows on this planet. But what else? They strike him as undersized and pale, with sloping shoulders and narrow chests. In comparison with American regiments, say the tall, superb northwestern men who went out to the Philippines, knowing many had no more of drill or military military than a hen, neither caring, the British soldiers look like boys rather than men of any sort, and not well-shaped boys.

Desiring to add yet further to his knowledge of the common people of England upon their own ground, the American visits Hampstead Heath on a bank holiday, that 'Amptstead' Heath immortalized by Du Maurier. It is the time and place for Great Britain's millions of London in their best clothes. The first point that impresses the American is the shockingly bad teeth of these English common people. Boys and girls of 12 and 14 skip about with all their upper front teeth gone. Girls of 18 seem to mind the absence of their front teeth no more than they would mind a hole in their hair. Not one in 500 appears to understand the use of toothbrush. They seem to take no pride in having teeth, artificial or otherwise, as Americans do, consequently their teeth are almost universally bad and ill kept. It is to be remembered that early decaying teeth are a sign of a weak constitution.

Going a grade higher than the 'Amptstead' Heath frequenter and observing the young clerks and shop men and women of London, they will be found to be pale and slight, with the universal bad teeth again. Many of the shop girls are exceedingly pretty, but it is a pallid, fragile prettiness suggesting consumption and dyspepsia; the same apparent weakness of constitution again.

The Englishman's apology for the small size of the enlisted men in the British army is that they come chiefly from the congested districts of London, or from the factory towns of England, where they had to go to work in the mills in childhood, and have never had the chance to grow as they ought to. So much the worse for Great Britain if this is so. It is a confession that she is unable to give her children their birthright of food and air. If this be true, then the English are degenerating physically.

The same deficient physique is noticeable in at least some of the agricultural districts of the kingdom. At a great agricultural show, one of the most important annual events in southwest England, to which farmers and their families flocked by the thousand, an American noted the same physical defects, the decaying teeth, the narrow chest and inferior size. The English children one sees in the parks and elsewhere in the kingdom are perhaps as beautiful as any on this earth can show, with their dazzling complexions and golden hair. They are handsomer than American children on the average. But as they approach youth they go off in looks. American adults are handsomer, as a people, than those of England. It is as if somehow, after a first-class start, the English growing child makes a bad finish.

It must be admitted, too, says the New York Sun, that even in those athletic games which have been the especial sports of British college youths for centuries the Americans are gradually creeping up and outstripping them one by one. Perhaps it is because the Americans have a better climate and more room to spread themselves than their British competitors. They certainly have a larger and more varied supply of fruits and food products.

Or was the whole assumption of English physical superiority a mistake and based upon a false statement from the beginning? Either the story was false in the beginning, or if true once, it is no longer. And if it was once true and is not now, either the Americans are rapidly improving as a race physically, or the English are going downhill. On the whole it does not seem likely that an impression which prevailed so widely as this in regard to the superior English physique 30 years ago could be wholly in error. At any rate it is hard to avoid the conclusion that, if they do not wish the nation to become a race of physical weaklings, the 5,000,000 inhabitants of London and the other millions in England's closely packed factory towns should scatter out and spread themselves to Australia, to South Africa, to Canada.

Voracious Birds and Fishes.

Birds are big eaters. The much-admired robin can give points to most of his kind. He can easily manage two-thirds of his weight in earthworms in a day. The common pigeon goes one better. He consumes his own weight in grain within a day. Fish are great gluttons. A single American bluefish has been known to kill and partially devour ten great cod, each as big as himself, in rapid succession.—London Mail.

CHINA NEEDS HELP.

Present Invasion May Prove a Blessing to the Nation.

For Centuries the Common People Have Been Robbed by Corrupt Officials—How the Empire Is Ruined.

[Special Correspondence.] ANY thousands of good people, both in this country and Europe, are wasting an abundance of sympathy on the Chinese government. Individually the Chinese may be entitled to thoughtful consideration, but the sooner his influence for mischief as a subject of a moribund civilization is destroyed the better for himself and mankind at large.

There is no reasonable doubt that China has for more than a century had the most corrupt government with which any country has ever been cursed. From the throne down to the local tax collectors, office has been used as a means to enrich individuals at the expense of the public; and the few brave men who have now and then dared to protest openly against this universal system of spoliation were executed without trial and in the most cruel fashion.

The cabals and intrigues in the imperial palace at Peking were followed by crimes too dark for comprehension by the western mind. The voice of justice was strangled by assassin or executioner, and true patriots were "removed" by seemingly occult means. The imperial family—Barbarian by descent and disposition—was back of all this horrible injustice and made tools of the avaricious nobles appointed to rule the several provinces of the empire. The advent of "foreign devils" was, of course, viewed with alarm by the fiendish and fanatical Tartar officials. They were quick to see that European intervention would sooner or later put an end to their tyranny and force them to safeguard, in a measure at least, the rights of the common people.

The fear of the judgment to come caused the reactionaries to organize and support the Boxer movement. The emperor, Kwang Hsu, an easy-going and not overly-smart young man of 30 years, was kept carefully in the dark. He was allowed to issue edicts, which were never obeyed. The famous dowager empress provided him with European toys, a wife and 12 concubines; and attended to all affairs of state herself. When it became evident that the emperor would have no part in the assembly of the council of state and had its members select the oldest son of Prince Tuan as heir presumptive, Prince Tuan—one of the most adroit as well as unscrupulous of Chinese leaders—placed himself at the head of the Boxer society whose purpose, the extinction of all foreigners and Christian converts, appealed to the bigotry and jealousy of the man-

darins. The dismal failure of the plans of the Boxers and the subsequent invasion of China by the troops of the allied powers have placed Prince Tuan's head in jeopardy and may lead to a complete reorganization of Chinese methods of government.

Inasmuch as but very few are familiar with China's governmental system as it has existed for hundreds of years, smoulins of its various branches should prove of interest to every student of history as well as to all observers of current events.

Under the ancient Chinese constitution the absolute control of the empire is entrusted, nominally at least, to the emperor, who is the supreme legislator of the nation, commander in chief of the army and navy, chief civil administrator of the empire, lord chief justice, owner of all of the land comprised within the limits of the country, archpriest and everything else worth mentioning. His official title is "Hien-Si," signifying "Son of Heaven."

Theoretically he rules over the whole of the earth, and, according to trustworthy reports, there are millions of Chinamen who devoutly believe that all the nations of the world acknowledge their emperor as chief lord. An anomaly it seems almost that in spite of the wide powers possessed by the "Son of Heaven" he is liable to be removed by popular vote on the appearance of any great scourge, such as a prolonged famine or drought or severe visitation of the plague.

The "Keung-ki-Chu" is a body which corresponds to the cabinets of western powers. It is composed of the leading statesmen and politicians of the empire, and its members visit the imperial palace every morning to confer with the emperor. The cabinet is controlled by an executive body, the "Ne-ko," composed of ministers noted for their sagacity, or wickedness. Other governmental departments are the "Tsung-li-yamen," which is the Chinese foreign office, and the "Li-fan-Yuen," or colonial office, which looks after the rights of foreigners dwelling in China and governs the provinces and tributary states of Mongolia and Tibet.

The "Han-lu," or Sacred College of Learned Men, is an interesting body composed of the empire's best scholars, and to be elected to a membership in it is considered a great honor. The college controls the boards of works, ceremony, revenue, military and naval affairs, office punishment, etc. Incidentally it also examines candidates for office in their literary, artistic and scientific attainments.

From time immemorial the Chi-

nese have been great sticklers for ceremonial etiquette, and it is consequently no surprise to learn that the board of ceremonies is one of the hardest worked departments of the "Han-lu." The board of ceremonies is subdivided into a committee of etiquette, which regulates all affairs concerning marriages, funerals and public celebrations; a committee on mutual intercourse, which has charge of the reception of illustrious strangers; a chamber for the management of festivities and imperial functions, and a committee on music and the drama.

An additional body—and one, too, that wields almost autocratic power—is the "Tu-char-Yuen," or the board of censors. Its special duty is to scrutinize the works of the mandarins throughout the empire, and its word is almost law.

Each province in the empire is, in addition to these national bodies, governed by a mandarin with the title

of "Swin-Fa," or viceroy. This official is a despot in his district, and possesses the sole right of approaching the throne on any matter connected with his province. The life and death of those under him are in his hands, and he is commander-in-chief of the local troops. As a sort of set-off to these immense powers his tenure of office is very brief, and he is liable to be removed on the most trivial pretext, such as the outbreak of a riot or rebellion in his province. Suspension, moreover, is usually followed by his death at the hands of the executioner.

Under the mandarins is a horde of officials, such as local supervisors, students of taxes, provincial judges of the criminal court and educational examiners. Each of the provinces is split up into several large divisions, which are in their turn divided and subdivided almost to infinity. Each little department has its little officials, and even the smallest among them must pay a tribute to his superior.

The common people have no rights whatever. They are permitted to work so that they can pay taxes. In order

to keep their places the local officials rob the day laborers and bribe the district authorities. The district authorities rob the mandarin and bribe the provincial officials. The latter extort money from the landowners and hand over a part of the spoils to the mandarins. And that dignitary extorts contributions from everybody in sight and sends a fair percentage to Peking to propitiate the imperial authority there.

In many sections of China highway robbery is countenanced by the authorities. The police are given a tip not to catch members of certain gangs of highwaymen, and an officer who neglects to take such a hint finds himself without a job. Highwaymen not so protected are treated with incredible cruelty—surely a pointed lesson that it is unwise to engage in robbery without dividing the spoils with the so-called "guardians of the peace."

Nothing but a political earthquake can correct the abuses so faintly outlined here; and certainly no one who has the true interests of the Chinese at heart would argue against the introduction of reforms. Should the present occupation of Peking by the troops of Europe and America lead to a reorganization of affairs in China, the Boxer massacres, terrible as they were, would prove a blessing to civilization, not too dearly bought with the blood of scores of noble men and women. And in this work of reformation our own government should take a leading part, one to which our children could point with pride and the emancipated slaves of China with deepest gratitude.

An Awful Weispiert.

"Do you know, Tommy, I think mamma is an awful gossip," said Bob.

"Why, Bob, you oughtn't to say such a thing as that about mamma."

"But it is true, for every single thing I do—that ain't good—she goes right off and tells papa."—Philadelphia Times.

An Odious Comparison.

Madge—Isn't Miss Autumn aging rapidly?

Marjorie—Yes, indeed. She will soon have as many wrinkles as her French bull-dog.—Judge.

Trans-Siberian Railroad.

The Trans-Siberian railroad will be completed at the present rate of working in about two years, the cost probably considerably exceeding the original estimate of \$175,000,000.

Imperial Audience Hall, Peking, from a Chinese painting.

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