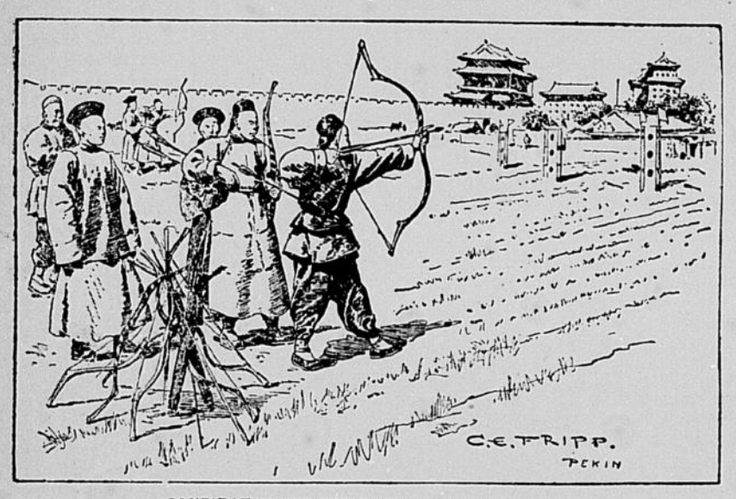
To Attempt to Make Soldiers of the Chinese

Army of the Empire to Be Reorganized—What It Now Consists Of—Quaint Body of Soldiers.

Two things serve to arouse at least a passing interest in the military capacity of China. First is the warlike situation in the east with Japan and Russia seemingly drawing nearer each day to a conflict in which China will be vitally interested, and for which that empire must furnish the battle ground. Dispatches from the orient tell of China's dependence upon Japan for the ousting of the bear from Manchuria, and the preservation of the empire. Under such conditions China would naturally become an ally of Japan in the struggle for eastern supremacy. These things make our second reason for evincing an interest in military China of still greater importance than it otherwise would be, and this second reason is the expressed intention of the Chinese government to reorganize and modernize its army.

Even before Caleb Cushing carried President Tyler's letter to Peking and negotiated the first treaty with China in 1843, the possibilities of the mailed fist had become a bug-a-boo to the people of the western nations. So long as China slept there was no danger; but China was awakening, and what the awakening might bring, what ambitions the eastern giant might evince, were serious questions in both Europe and America. More than half a century has passed since Caleb Cushing negotiated our first commercial treaty with China, and our first fears seem no nearer realization than they were then.



CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE IN THE CHINESE ARMY.

In a general way, the Chinese soldier is a nonenity so far as fighting qualities are concerned, though there have been exceptions to this general rule. During the Taiping rebellion, the greatest of the many civil wars China has known, the English Gen. Gordon proved that the coolies were not cowards when properly led. His "ever victorious" force of less than 10,000 men, put to route rebel armies ten times its size. Gordon's force was officered by foreigners, and had a sprinkling of foreigners in its ranks, and it was the fearless example set by these men which made heroes of the coolies. A stranger force was never mustered under military banner than this of Gordon, nor seldom a more heroic one. Soldiers of fortune from practically every nation of Europe and America, men who were fighting merely for the adventure and pay the service promised, yet the power of one man not only made heroes of them, but heroes of the Chinese coolies as well. It was an experiment that proved possibilities under right conditions.

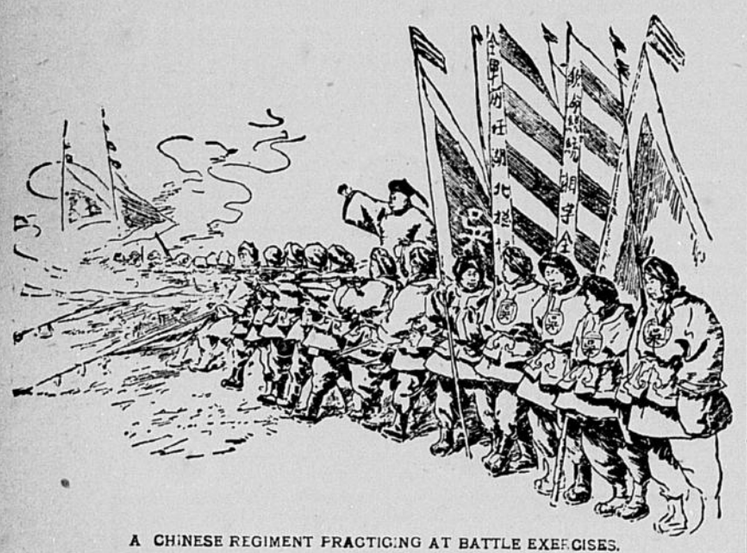
Of capable military leaders China developed but few during the Taiping rebellion, or since that time. Of the few Gen Ching, who served with Gordon, after his desertion from the rebel forces, was a notable character, and of great military ability. During the several petty foreign wars in which China was engaged down to the time of the outbreak of the war with Japan, no character of anything like equal ability was developed, nor did the more important conflict with Japan bring to the front a leader of such worth as to be classed with him. This lack of military leaders would seem to place China as a non-militant power of whom the world need have no fears.

It takes training to make perfection, and the training of the Chinese soldier is the one great essential lacking. Through all its defeats administered since the days of the coming of the white man, the empire has never felt the need of remodeling its system of training. In fact, the soldier in China is held more in contempt than esteem. The men who are entrusted with the destinies of the army must prove their efficiency in the sacred writings of Confucius rather than in the science of war. The officers of the army are drawn from those who successfully pass the civil examination, the training for which is useless not only from the military standpoint, but the administration of civil duties as well. Aside from these examinations the only other test required is intended to prove efficiency with bows and arrows, a relic of antiquity scarcely to be imagined outside the wilds of Africa.

Even with such a force it might be possible to accomplish something as has been shown by the success of Gen. Gordon, were they given any practical training. One of the prominent features of the drill of the army consists of teaching the recruit to assume an attitude and expression to frighten his opponent. At the time of the opening of the war with Japan, and, in fact, at the present time, much of the armament consists of halberds, pikes, bows and arrows and long smooth-bore muskets, while practically one-half the men in each regiment are banner bearers and not armed at all. Of methods of commissariat nothing is known, nor is there such a thing as hospitals or medical service. The reasons for this state of affairs lie, in a great measure, to the fact that funds appropriated for the army have been misapplied, and gone to enrich boodling officials.

The Manchu army, which is practically the only imperial army of China, numbers from 80,000 to 100,000 men, though on paper it boasts of 300,000. Of these about 40,000 are stationed in garrisons in Manchuria, and some 6,000 in Peking. This army is the support of the Manchu dynasty, and is recruited almost exclusively from the Manchus and the Monguls.

The provincial army, called the Green Flags, consists of 18 corps, one for each province. These various corps are under the command of the governor of the different provinces, and there is no cooperation between them. This force numbers less than 200,000 men, though its paper strength is more than 500,000. This makes the total army of China number about 300,000 men on the present peace footing, with a paper strength, or war footing, of close to 1,000,000.



A CHINESE REGIMENT PRACTICING AT BATTLE EXERCISES.

That the Chinese army as it now exists, with all its crudeness and superstitions, is useless, or even worse, was proven by the war with Japan. That it is possible to make a soldier of no mean ability of the Chinese coolie was proven by Gen. Gordon, but China will have to take a long step forward and forget the superstitutions of centuries before she can do in a large way what Gen. Gordon did with a small force. With militant Japan as a drill master, it is possible that the army of the empire may be made into a formidable foeman for Russia, but it cannot be done if war comes quickly.

China, with its 400,000,000 people, could easily dominate the east, and prevent her own disintegration, if she succeeds in making soldiers of her raw material, but to do so must be the growth of generations and not the work of a day or official edict, and the chances are the modernized army will not come in time to save the empire.

DANIEL CLEVERTON.

GUESSING SONG.

Oh, ho! oh, ho! Pray, who can I be?
I sweep o'er the land, I scour o'er the sea;
I cuff the tall trees till they bow down their heads,
And I rock the wee birdies asleep in their beds.
Oh, ho! oh, ho! And who can I be
That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I rumple the breast of the gray-headed daw,
I tip the rook's tail up and make him cry "caw;"
But though I love fun, I'm so big and so strong,
At a puff of my breath the great ships sail along.
Oh, ho! oh, ho! And who can I be
That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I swing all the weathercocks this way and that,
I play hare-and-hounds with a runaway hat;
But, however I wander, I ne'er go astray;
For, go where I will, I've a free right of way!
Oh, ho! oh, ho! And who can I be
That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?

I skim o'er the heather, I dance up the street;
I've foes that I laugh at, and friends that I greet;
I'm named in the east and I'm known in the west,
But I think the Dean Bridge is the place I love best.
Oh, ho! oh, ho! And who can I be
That sweep o'er the land and scour o'er the sea?
—Henry Johnstone, in St. Nicholas.

ROOSTER FINDS MOON.

Lord of the Barnyard Made a Strange Discovery Which Surprised Him Very Much.

Because he had eaten too much supper, a rooster one night was unable to sleep, and he just had to sit up on the roost and gaze out through the cracks in the henhouse roof at the stars while all the rest of his family slept and snored.

He thought the stars were very wonderful, and the moon seemed marvelous.

The next day, as he crossed a field, he came across a ball—one of those fancy colored bouncing balls that children love to play with. Now, Mr. Rooster had never seen one of them before, and he did not know what it was.

"This must be the moon that I saw last night," he said, finally. "I wonder what it is doing down here, instead of being up in the sky. It is very beautiful, it is true, but I would like to see it shine as it did last night. I suppose it doesn't shine during the day, so I'll wait until night and see it."

THIS MUST BE THE MOON.

So Mr. Rooster sat down by the ball and waited. The sun went down and it grew dark, and black clouds hid the stars and all the sky, but still the ball would not shine.

"It is very strange," declared the rooster, as he sat and waited.

All the other chickens had gone to roost hours before, but still the rooster waited and watched.

Then the wind began to blow and the thunder to roll and the lightning to flash, and the first thing Mr. Rooster knew it was raining in torrents, and he was soaked to the skin, and most frightened out of his pits.

"I'll save the moon," he cried, and he grabbed up the ball and tried to run with it. When he reached the henhouse door the rain had stopped, and the wind had swept the clouds from the sky, and Mr. Rooster looked up and saw the moon smiling sweetly at him.

"So this isn't the moon, after all," said Mr. Rooster, looking down at the ball. "Well, I guess it must be one of the stars."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Relic of Roman Rule.

A most interesting memorial of the Roman occupation of England has just been sold under the auctioneer's hammer. This is the Roman station of Amboglanna, the largest on the famous wall which marked the limit of the Roman province. After an existence of 1,800 years the walls of the station, five feet thick, are in a wonderful state of preservation. The gateways are noble specimens of Roman work. Some of the wedge-shaped stones in the arches are still to be seen on the ground. The interior of the camp is marked with lines of streets and the ruins of buildings.

Marks Would Not Come.

Small Willie was trying to write with a dull lead pencil that his mother had given him, but meeting with poor success he finally exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, the wood has slipped down over the lead, and the marks can't come out!"

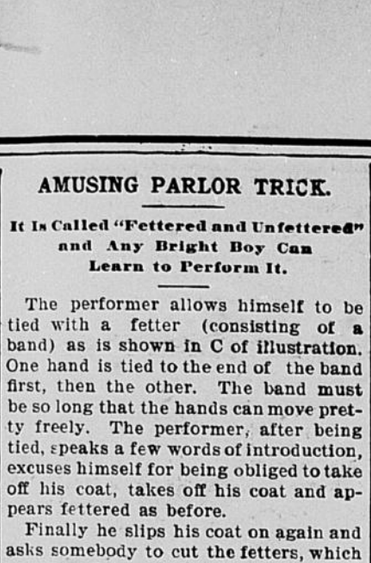
AMUSING PARLOR TRICK.

It Is Called "Fettered and Unfettered" and Any Bright Boy Can Learn to Perform It.

The performer allows himself to be tied with a fetter (consisting of a band) as is shown in C of illustration. One hand is tied to the end of the band first, then the other. The band must be so long that the hands can move pretty freely. The performer, after being tied, speaks a few words of introduction, excuses himself for being obliged to take off his coat, takes off his coat and appears fettered as before.

Finally he slips his coat on again and asks somebody to cut the fetters, which appear to be intact and in the same condition as when they were tied at the beginning of the performance.

To perform this trick effectively, a cutaway coat should be worn, having in its back pockets the principal requisite, a second fetter. Besides this fetter a small pair of scissors is secreted in the same pocket. This pair of scissors serves to cut the band tied by the audience, for these fetters must come off to make room for the others.



FETTERED AND UNFETTERED.

After the hands of the performer are tied, he goes into the pocket with one hand, takes the pair of scissors and cuts the fetters. As his hands are tied behind his back, nobody can see this manipulation. The old fetters are put away in his pocket and the new fetter is made ready for use. This second fetter is made in the following way. The band used is just as long as the one used to tie the hands.

On each end a simple knot is made (a), then a loose knot in the shape of a loop (b), allowing the band to slip for tightening around the wrists and loosening as the performer desires (a-B). After the original fetters are cut and the coat is taken off the performer slips both hands into the loops and pulls them tight.

This fetter cannot be distinguished from the original one. By repeating this experiment, all sorts of variations in tying and untying can be shown, until finally this pseudo band is cut off by one of the audience.—Boston Globe.

SPIDER ENTRAPS BIRD.

A Brown Creeper Invades the Field Museum and Suddenly Comes to Grief.

"'Will you walk into my parlor?'
Said the spider to the fly."

This time it was not the fly that the wily spider sought to entangle in his meshes, but a small bird, against which he felt he had just cause for grievance.

It seems that during the past season the Field museum at Chicago has been infested with large quantities of obnoxious spiders. They have festooned the ceiling and great columns of the building with yards of their shuttle-work, much to the annoyance of the authorities. Scrubwomen and janitors have tried in vain to relieve the building of the pests and their work. Even the suggestions of frost did not seem to greatly diminish the insects. Finally a wee brown creeper, discovering the state of things there, decided to take up his abode inside and assist the authorities in ridding the building of the pests. For several days he flitted about very much as he pleased, confining himself mainly to the rear entrance room, wagging up and down column after column and probing his long bill into every crevice. With his murderous vigilance he actually carried on a very effective work there. He seemed a permanent fixture, and the authorities and the public eyed him amusedly.

The other morning, however, as a curator of one of the departments was passing, a guard remarked:

"There's a bird for your collection! Looks as if it was done for."

The bird lay panting on its side at the bottom of one of the columns.

"Bring a fly," said the scientist, as he took the little creeper in his hands.

The guard held a buzzing fly on the point of a pin to the bird's beak, saw it bite at it voraciously.

"Doesn't look as if he were going to die," said the scientist. "I wonder what's the matter with him, anyway?"

Turning the bird over in his hand, he found it had been entrapped in a large spider's web, which had bound the wing and tail together in such a manner as to preclude flying. It looked as if some wise old spider had resented the bird's work of extermination and had purposely ensnared him in a trap.

The queer bandage was removed and the bird darted out over the iron grating and shot out of sight across the lagoon. —Chicago Daily News.

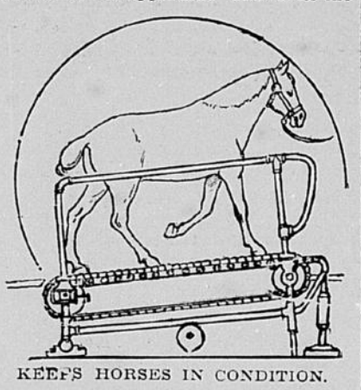
The Armchair's Sleeves.

Tommie's mother was having some furniture upholstered, and she sent him to the shop to see when it would be ready. "It's all done 'cept the sleeves to the big armchair," the little man explained upon his return.

EXERCISER FOR HORSES.

An Invention in Which Owners of Racing Animals Should Be Particularly Interested.

One great difficulty encountered by sportsmen in shipping their running or trotting horses to foreign lands in order to compete with native-born animals for prizes and honors is maintaining the stock in good condition during the tedious journey across the ocean. Many a first-class horse, capable of running well at home, loses form when placed on shipboard, and is easily beaten by the other contestants in races abroad. By the time the horse has been trained up to its normal condition again the change in climate or feed and water begin to make their effect felt, necessitating withdrawal from the races or further defeats. A possible solution of the problem of maintaining the animals in good condition during their ocean journey is offered in the apparatus shown in the accompanying illustration, which seems to be practically an adaptation of the old horse power so long utilized on threshing machines. This machine is intended for use directly in the stalls, replacing the floor and remaining stationary in a horizontal position when not in use. When the animal requires exercise the turnbuckles at the front of the stall are rotated to elevate the floor and set the endless walk in motion under the weight on the inclined plane. While it is not expected that equally as good training can be had with this apparatus as on a track, its use should enable the driver to go almost directly on the race course in competition upon his arrival, thus saving valuable time and insuring better physical condition of the animal.—Louisville Courier-Journal.



KEEPS HORSES IN CONDITION.

Cause of Acute Insanity.

A German physician, to determine if acute insanity is caused by a toxin in the blood, injected at intervals serum, blood and cerebro-spinal fluid from a patient suffering from acute dementia with hallucinations without the least effect.

Porto Rican Coffee.

The exports of coffee from Porto Rico exceed all other products in value.

POWERFUL NEW RIFLE.

It Carries a Ball Ten Miles and May Have Important Bearing on Modern Warfare.

A great advance has been made in small arms by George E. Rounds, of Plymouth, Mass., which may have an important bearing on the armaments of the world and the battles of the future, for through his suggestion the range of the modern rifle has been greatly increased and its penetration more than doubled.

The result is a finished rifle of the Winchester model of 1895, short, like the old civil war carbine, but unlike this, it has a tapering barrel which approaches one-half inch in thickness at the rear end and is formed of a fine piece of nickel steel, which gives a maximum of strength. The gun is of .405 bore and the cartridge looks like any other except the shell is not chocked on the end where the bullet fits in. Inside the bright brass shell is a charge of 52 grains of cordite, a smokeless powder which has long been in favor by the users of the British naval guns, and as used in them resembling the long black, flexible strings of licorice found in the confectionery stores, the strips being bundled into fagots for the big cannon, which, of course, is not done in Mr. Rounds' gun. Fifty-two grains of cordite, it is asserted, has the explosive power of nearly a pound of common black rifle powder, and it will drive the 300-grain, soft-nose, tin-coated bullet out with a muzzle velocity of 2,204 feet per second, while at 100 yards range the striking energy is represented by 3,235 foot pounds.

From tests made it is calculated the gun fired at an elevation of 45 degrees will throw its projectile a distance of ten miles, while at shorter ranges its enormous muzzle velocity gives it a flat trajectory amounting at ordinary ranges to almost point blank shooting. In the matter of penetration the cordite cartridge leaves the others completely out of sight. A high-power 30-30 sporting cartridge at 100 yards will penetrate 30 inches of pine, and a United States government high velocity cartridge will drive its projectile ten inches deeper, but this new one at the same range will bore through 100 inches of pine wood.

Growth of Labor Unions.

The rapid rise of labor unionism in America is traced by W. Z. Ripley, professor of economics at Harvard. While English unions have increased, in nine years, from 1,500,000 to 1,900,000, those of the United States have grown from 900,000 to 2,000,000. The causes for its growth have been, in the main, prosperity, the trust or combination idea, the coal strike, and the labor movement's natural growth. The future of unions will depend, Prof. Ripley thinks, on the continued prosperity of the country and on the administration of the unions.

Metric System in Schools.

The two or three years' gain of the German and Spanish schools over ours is due to the metric system and phonetic spelling, by which the greater part of compound numbers and spelling, such a terror to our children, is made unnecessary.

The Chief Cause of Suicide.

Despondency is the chief cause of suicide, and business losses are more potent factors in driving individuals to the commission of rash deeds than ill health, insanity, disappointment in love or strong drink.

Sensational Kite Voyage in English Channel

BEING pulled through the sea at the end of a kite string is an exhilarating experience, and the recent attempt of S. F. Cody to cross the fickle straits of Dover has proven that there is something about the location which exercises a peculiar fascination over experimenters with new forms of locomotion. Cycle boats, "roller boats," and novel life saving devices are always tested in the swift tides and rough seas that separate Dover from Calais. The perilous crossing is attempted with the idea that if it can be accomplished nothing else need be feared.

It was doubtless this feeling that led Mr. Cody to choose the channel passage as the supreme test for his kite drawn boat

The boat is only 12 feet long and 4½ feet in beam. Much space is taken up by the canvas decking, and it was a tight fit for the two passengers.

It weighs nearly 400 pounds and is constructed of canvas stretched on wooden ribs, and about 150 pounds of lead had been attached to the keel after the capsize, which occurred when Mr. Cody went on a trial trip at Gravesend, and the effect was to make her distinctly "stiffer" and more seaworthy.

A word as to the kites. They were of the type with which Mr. Cody won the silver medal at the Alexandra palace kite competition, and which has been adopted by the British admiralty for man lifting in war time. They are made of black silk and bamboo, and men look like great bats when flying in the air.

For the trip Mr. Cody used two kites 15 feet across, and once well up they flew steadily as if nailed to the sky. The power they exert is so great that the inventor was dragged feet foremost along the beach when flying one only half the size!

Both kites flew on the same line, which was made fast to the towing rope in the nose of the boat.

Mr. Cody himself was an interesting figure in his cowboy hat and yellow oilskins. His long hair floated over his shoulders, and he wore a pneumatic life belt and motor "goggles," to protect his eyes from the glare of the sun on the sea.

If it came to swimming, there were life lines outside to cling to, for Mr. Cody determined not to desert his boat even if she capsized. He meant to hold on to the life lines and be towed through the water by the kites until he struck France.

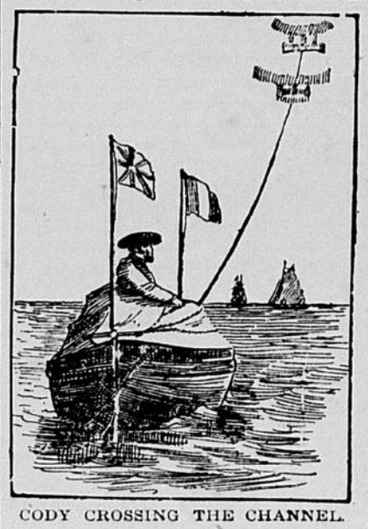
All reasonable precautions were thus taken short of chartering a tug.

When all was ready, and the camera fiends had done their worst, the crowd gave the boat a shoveoff There was a rush and a swoop on the top of a roller, and the plucky navigator was off.

Shore boats were soon outdistanced as the little craft tore along, leaving a foaming wake behind.

Again, however, came the ominous sagging of the kite line, while the lower kite circled and plunged like a "winged" pheasant.

The sea anchor was tried again, and the boat brought beam on to the sea.



CODY CROSSING THE CHANNEL.

The wind meant to disappoint, and it did. Mr. Cody hauled in the kite line hand over fist while the boat jumped about like a cork. Nearer and nearer came the kite, but when only a yard or so away it fell into the sea. Now came the most difficult and dangerous part of the adventure. The tide caught the kite, and nearly dragged it under the boat, tilting the flimsy craft on one side, as if it would capsize it.

This ended the effort to reach France. Had the wind held the trip would doubtless have been accomplished, and although the results attempted failed of fruition, it was proved positively that a kite can pull a boat.