

FEEDING a TRANS-PACIFIC LINER

Enormous Food Supplies Carried for the Fifty-Eight Days' Round Trip Run of the Oriental Steamers Make Each Resemble Noah's Ark

By Edwin Emerson Jr.

WHEN the steamship Mongolia left here for the orient the other day with a full complement of passengers very few of those first class passengers, we dare say, had any realization of the quantity of food stuffs that had been stocked on board the steamer to keep them alive during their voyage.

During an ocean trip everything runs so smoothly, meals are served at such steady intervals, that scarcely any passenger on board ever feels impelled to give a thought as to how these meals and the ingredients for them were prepared.

All the passengers know, or care to know, is that certain fresh supplies like fresh milk and the freshest of fruits give out after the first or second day at sea, to be replaced by tinned milk and cream and such fruits as are commonly kept in cold storage.

For the most fastidious of passengers, for this reason alone, the next port of call, such as Honolulu in the case of the Pacific Mail liners, becomes a point of absorbing interest; for here fresh milk, green vegetables and fresh exotic fruits like alligator pears, papais, mangoes and plantains will again be taken on.

If these fastidious passengers should take interest enough to wander down into the steward's storeroom, among the refrigerating rooms, cold storage vaults and ice plants, they might be surprised to find how small an item this matter of fresh green vegetables so really represents among the other stores in the vast hold of the ship.

Here they would find many thousands of pounds of fresh beef, enough to make a whole herd of cattle were these beefs still on the hoof; other thousands of pounds of mutton and pork representing whole flocks of sheep and droves of pigs. They would find many thousands of sacks of rice, amounting almost to a hundred thousand pounds, with similar stores of flour, beans, barrels of fish, whether dried, smoked or salted, and thousands of tin boxes full of crackers, biscuits and hard tack.

Much has been said and written of the vast undertaking of stocking the great trans-Atlantic liners that ply between New York and the various ports

of Europe. Yet this task, both as to its quantity and as to its inherent difficulties, is almost insignificant compared to the stupendous task of properly stocking for trans-Pacific liners.

The great difference between stocking trans-Atlantic liners and those that cross the Pacific lies first in the fact that the Atlantic liners need only to be stocked for trips of one week or a fortnight at most, enabled as they are to lay in supplies at both ends of their voyage, whereas the trans-Pacific liners have to stock not only for a trip three times as long, but for a full round trip to the orient and back, covering a stretch of 58 days, allowing for possible delays and time spent in ports. Secondly, our trans-Pacific liners, unlike those of the Atlantic, which have to provide for passengers and crews of one race only must provide forage and commissary supplies for tastes and habits as radically different as are those of the people of white blood and the Chinese. Nay, what is more, the commissary department must specially provide for the diversified tastes of certain oriental people, such as the Chinese of southern China and of Mongolia or of Manchuria, and for the Japanese and Koreans as well.

This diversity of stores is in itself one of the greatest difficulties of the trans-Pacific commissary department. A single item in the ship's commissary supplies will serve to illustrate this difficulty. This item is the important supply of rice. To the average American traveler rice is merely rice, but not so to the oriental. No self-respecting Chinaman will eat Japanese rice; vice versa no proud son of Nippon will condescend to touch Chinese rice. The mild eyed Koreans for their part will rise in wrath at the mere suggestion that they should eat rice either of China or Japan; they must have their special Korean rice. The difference between these various varieties of rice to an uninitiated American seems to lie merely in the fact that Chinese rice when cooked appears more dry; Korean rice appears more spongy; whereas Japanese rice looks and tastes more mushy. The difference to the port steward means that he must provide for the full return trip in one ship like the Mongolia some 60,000 pounds of Chinese rice, 14,000 pounds of Japanese rice and 6,000 pounds of Korean rice.

Each to His Own

Then there are other oriental delicacies that must be taken into consideration. Apart from such toothsome relishes as dried lily flowers, taro, bamboo shoots and fungus the Chinese in order to consider themselves properly provided for must have no less

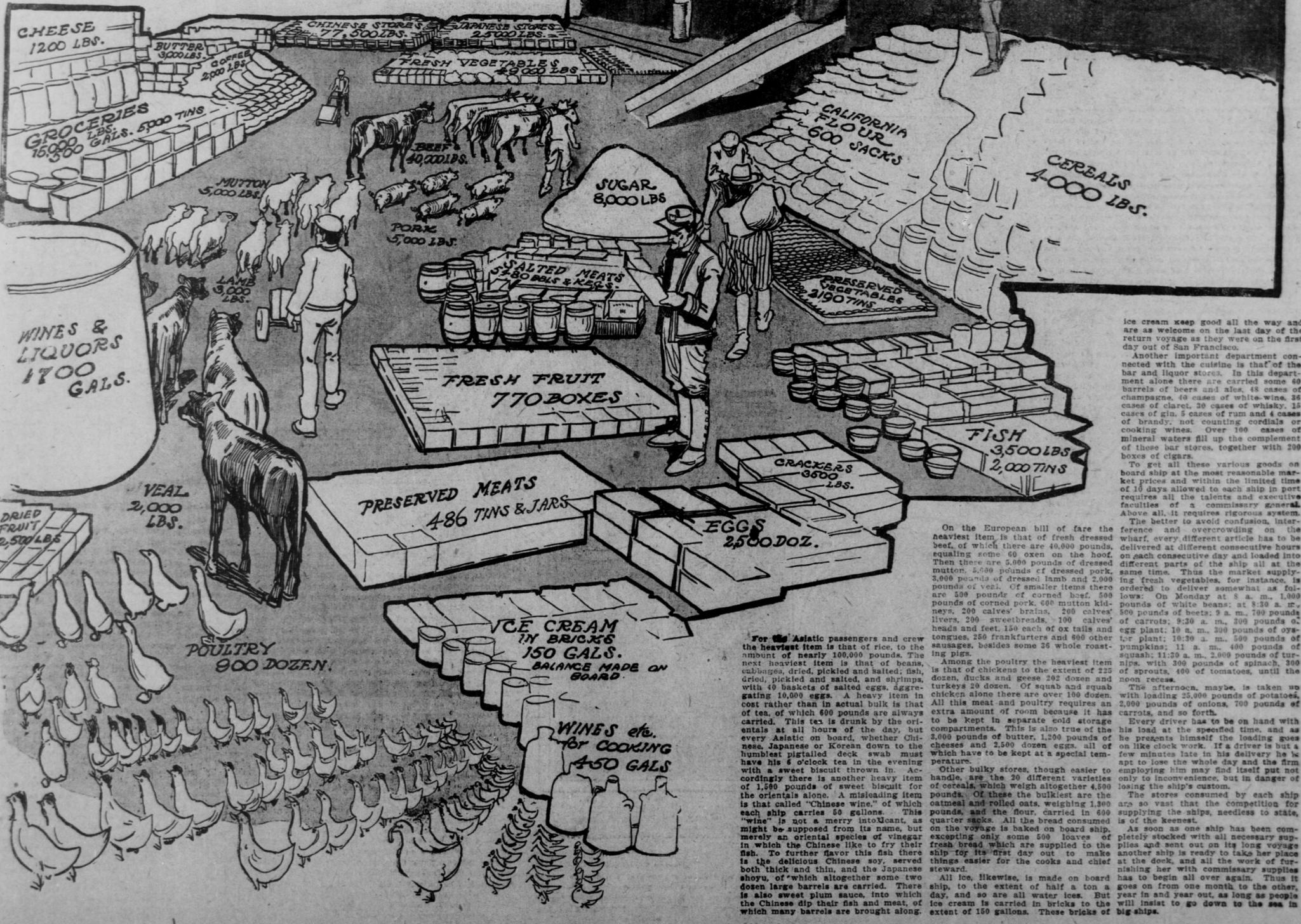
than seven different varieties of beans. The Japanese on the other hand must have their seaweed, their raw fish, their pickled scallions, resembling onions, their takuan and umeboshi, of which mysterious articles of food several dozens of large tubs have to be laid in store.

All oriental stores, it should be understood, are purchased in the orient and make their round trip from Hongkong or Yokohama to San Francisco and back, while all American supplies are purchased in San Francisco regardless of the fact that many tinned goods and grains can be obtained more cheaply abroad.

While the supplying of oriental provisions to a casual observer appears the most complicated item the reverse is really the case. The list of eatables that has to be provided for American and European passengers is fully six times as long as that provided for the orientals, though the number of oriental passengers coming westward far exceeds the number of white passengers carried both ways. This is because the greater number of white travelers are first class passengers who are very particular in their tastes.

The average American passenger feels inclined to smile when he hears that the Chinese passengers insist on half a dozen different varieties of beans, but most Chinamen must feel no less amazed at the fact that the white cabin passengers require 37 varieties of fish and 12 varieties of crackers in order to be happy. After all, it must be admitted that there is more difference between red beans, green beans, white beans, card beans, stick beans, sauce beans and salted beans than there is between Boston crackers, champions, Jenny Lind's, knick knacks, picnic, fancy assorted ginger snaps, Graham wafers, tea cakes or the ordinary meal, milk and soda crackers, not to mention the hard tack and pilot crackers, presumably consumed by the crew and by the pilot. The full variety of articles that has to be provided by the port steward for each trip of a vessel aggregates no less than 537 items. Of almost every one of these items varying quantities have to be procured according to the number of passengers booked, and taking account for whatever stores may be already on hand from the last voyage.

The heaviest item in a ship's supplies, as every one knows, is that of coal. This is so big an item that, unlike the eatables, it must be supplied at all ports of call. To equip an outgoing liner of the size and tonnage of the Mongolia, which is 14,000 tons, requires 4,000 tons of coal. With a full complement of passengers the mounting that have to be fed number 2,172, to wit: 340 first class passengers, 150 forward steerage, 1,400 Asiatic steerage, 55 white officers, stewards and sailors and 225 Asiatic crew.



ice cream keep good all the way and are as welcome on the last day of the return voyage as they were on the first day out of San Francisco.

Another important department connected with the cuisine is that of the bar and liquor stores. In this department alone there are carried some 40 barrels of beer and ales, 48 cases of champagne, 40 cases of white wine, 35 cases of claret, 30 cases of whisky, 35 cases of gin, 5 cases of rum and 4 cases of brandy, not counting cordials or cooking wines. Over 100 cases of mineral waters fill up the complement of these bar stores, together with 300 boxes of cigars.

To get all these various goods on board ship at the most reasonable market prices and within the limited time of 10 days allowed to each ship in port requires all the talents and executive facilities of a commissary general. Above all, it requires rigorous system.

The better to avoid confusion, interference and overcrowding on the wharf, every different article has to be delivered at different consecutive hours on each consecutive day and loaded into different parts of the ship all at the same time. Thus the market supplying fresh vegetables, for instance, is ordered to deliver somewhat as follows: On Monday at 8 a. m., 1,000 pounds of corned beef, 600 mutton kidneys, 200 calves' brains, 200 calves' livers, 200 sweetbreads, 100 calves' heads and feet, 150 each of ox tails and tongues, 250 frankfurters and 800 other sausages, besides some 25 whole roasting pigs.

Among the poultry the heaviest item is that of chickens to the extent of 225 dozen, ducks and geese 200 dozen and turkeys 20 dozen. Of squab and quab chicken alone there are over 100 dozen. All this meat and poultry requires an extra amount of room because it has to be kept in separate cold storage compartments. This is also true of the 2,000 pounds of butter, 1,200 pounds of cheese and 2,500 dozen eggs, all of which have to be kept at a special temperature.

Other bulky stores, though easier to handle, are the 20 different varieties of cereals, which weigh altogether 4,500 pounds. Of these the bulkiest are the oatmeal and rolled oats, weighing 1,300 pounds, and the flour, carried in 600 quarter sacks. All the bread consumed on the voyage is baked on board ship, excepting only some 500 loaves of fresh bread which are supplied to the ship for its first day out to make things easier for the cooks and chief steward.

All ice, likewise, is made on board ship, to the extent of half a ton a day, and so are all water ices. But ice cream is carried in bricks to the extent of 150 gallons. These bricks of big ships.

For the Asiatic passengers and crew the heaviest item is that of rice, to the amount of nearly 100,000 pounds. The next heaviest item is that of beans, cabbage, dried, pickled and salted; fish, dried, pickled and salted, and shrimps, with 40 baskets of salted eggs, aggregating 10,000 eggs. A heavy item in cost rather than in actual bulk is that of tea, of which 600 pounds are always carried. This tea is drunk by the orientals at all hours of the day, but every Asiatic on board, whether Chinese, Japanese or Korean down to the humblest pigtailed deck swab must have his 6 o'clock tea in the evening with a sweet biscuit thrown in. Accordingly there is another heavy item of 1,500 pounds of sweet biscuit for the orientals alone. A misleading item is that called "Chinese wine," of which each ship carries 50 gallons. This "wine" is not a merry intoxicant, as might be supposed from its name, but merely an oriental species of vinegar in which the Chinese like to fry their fish. To further flavor this fish there is the delicious Chinese soy, served both thick and thin, and the Japanese shoyu, of which altogether some two dozen large barrels are carried. There is also sweet plum sauce, into which the Chinese dip their fish and meat, of which many barrels are brought along.