

HINDOO CREMATION.

THEY BURN THE BODIES OF THEIR DEAD IN THE OPEN AIR.

Strange and Sanitary Mode Which Has Been Practiced by Them For Thousands of Years—The Blessed State From the Hindoo Standpoint.

Although we are beginning to believe more and more every year in cremation and think ourselves accordingly advanced, the Hindoos have practiced it for thousands of years. The funeral pile for a rajah sometimes costs tens of thousands of rupees. The Hindoo body is sometimes burned when 3 rupees cover the entire expenses.

A writer to the Pall Mall Budget tells very entertainingly of a visit she made to one of the cheapest and most primitive of these three.

Just as she entered into the inclosure where a burning ghat was in full operation there was a crack—a sharp report like a pistol. The heat had just broken through a dead man's skull. It was the last human part to protest against the extinguishment of death.

The funeral pile of a poor Hindoo looks like an ordinary kitchen yard wood pile. But if you go up close to it you discover something very like a human form, a glowing, charred mass, distinguished from every other shape, animate or inanimate, for the Hindoos literally purify their dead by fire. The body is burned until absolutely nothing remains but a handful of ashes, ashes wholly free from any unclean or poisonous matter.

Two coolies carried the body upon a rude litter, woven from coarse grasses and held together by outlines of bamboo. Two of the dead man's brothers followed, chatting pleasantly. Four stout sticks of wood were driven upright into the ground, at the corners of an imaginary parallelogram about six feet by two. Between these four posts were loosely laid sticks of dry, cheap wood. When the pile was a little more than three feet high, the body was laid upon it. A dirty piece of crash, of the quality the coolies wear about their loins, partly wrapped the dead. One of the brothers stepped up and poured about four ounces of oil over the body. This insured a quicker cremation, but was something of a luxury and not a universal practice.

More wood was piled upon the dead. A thin stick was lighted at the other funeral pile, which was now flaming finely, the second pile was lighted, and the cremation of the newcomer was begun. The two brothers appeared very interested in the igniting and decidedly pleased when it was accomplished. They squatted down upon the ground, just so far from the pile that they might feel their scant, filthy garments were fairly safe from the sparks, but near enough to watch all the changing phases of the cremation and to see easily when it was consummated.

They untied a dirty rag from about a small bundle one of them had brought with them. They took out a small earthen bowl, it was clean and shining, and so was the brass chalice each lifted from his filthily turbaned head. The chalice held water. The bowl held curry and rice. They fell to eating with gusto. And, pray, why not? They were eating to live. Their brother was burning to live—to live in Hindoo paradise. From the Hindoo point of view this state was far more blessed.

The cremation which was in full blast when the writer arrived was finally completed. Two distinct kinds of ashes were left. The human ashes were carefully gathered into an old chalice. The authorities do not allow those ashes to be thrown into the river, and they are never thrown there in the presence of Europeans. The ashes of the wood were swept swiftly away. The bits of wood not quite burned were frugally collected to be utilized in the next pile.

The correspondent also tells of a visit to a burning ghat after sundown. "Night," she goes on, "is the time of Hindoo leisure, as indeed it is of most primitive peoples. The inclosure was crowded with burning piles. "We sailed down the Ganges. The outlines of the attendants of the dead and of the funeral pile were sharply silhouetted against the black background of the dark night by the flames of the growling death fires. And from that part of the shore sacred to Hindoo worship came the shrieking and the songs of many thousand half mad devotees.

"In a primitive part of interior India I once saw a maharajah's funeral pile. It had cost a positive fortune. It was built of expensive spicy woods and saturated with costly oils. It was richly gilded, and the dead was wrapped in embroidered silken sheets. For miles the air was sweet and pungent and thick with the perfumed smoke. I remember having thought when a child that the literally sweetest experience I ever had was the attending of a high mass at St. Peter's in Rome. But now I must own that the sweetest smell I ever smelled was the burning of a maharajah's funeral pile."

Stopped His Laughter. A man began to laugh immoderately over some amusing narrative and finally, to his dismay, was conscious that he could not stop. The doctor had given him up, and the family were gathered around in expectation of the end when a telegram arrived saying that his wife's mother was coming to make a short visit. He was saved and has laughed no more.—London Tit-Bits.

IS THE FARMER GUILTY?

He Has Been Charged With Opposing Public Road Improvement.

It has often been asserted that the main opposition to improved highways proceeds from those who would receive the largest benefit from them—namely, the farmers.

Is this true? It becomes the duty of the American farmer to ask himself if there is the least basis for an assertion which throws upon him the chief odium for a public condition which he is ever ready to condemn and blame, maybe upon his road overseer or county court.

So far as the facts are brought out it must be confessed that the farmer has been guilty at least of inexplicable negligence of his own interest in doing nothing to inaugurate a reform whose necessity he would be the last to deny. New York has a road law adopted at nearly the same time as the Missouri law and similar to it in many respects. Like the Missouri law, however, it must be ratified by the counties before becoming effective, and this feature has operated to make it practically a dead letter.

In Missouri the case is similar, and if anything worse. A law has remained upon the statute books for nearly a year, which, if rightly applied, might have led to the construction of hundreds of miles of first class roads. Yet this law today, by reason of the indifference or opposition of some one, is to all intents and purposes an unknown thing.

If the farmers are responsible for this state of affairs either in New York or Missouri, it is time that they were waking up. The benefit to the farmer of good roads is more than double their benefit to any other person. To others it may be a question of pleasure and incidentally, through the increased value of real estate and growing population of desirable residents, of business. To the farmer it is a matter of business pre-eminently. If pleasure and convenience come in, they are only incidental. There is much talk of the "prohibitive" cost of good roads, but any shrewd business man or investor, after weighing the facts on each side, would be willing to pay twice the amount if necessary and have good roads.

In all probability the farmer is not wholly to blame for the prevailing indifference to road improvement. Whether he is or not there is a glorious opportunity before the American farmer to prove to the townsman that he is not a mossback, dead to his own interest, but a live, progressive member of society. The way for him to do it is to take the lead in road reform himself and never turn back until the desired end is reached.—Kansas City Times.

Benefits of Good Roads.

Many people who have not studied the subject of improved roads do not understand the immense benefit which they bring to a community. Yet of all the thousands of miles of good roads that have been made in this and other countries the first mile has not yet been found that has not proved to be profitable. The increase in land values alone is always more than enough to pay for the improvement. Some benefits and advantages we cannot always compute in dollars and cents, and some things our common sense impels us to take for granted. No farmer in this country can tell the money value of an education, and yet each farmer concedes its value and sends his children to school and watches carefully their advancement in knowledge. Good health is of infinite value, and the farmer seeks it and guards it, but he cannot tell its value in dollars and cents. The same is true of good habits, good morals and good clothes. Do not, therefore, waste any time in doubting the value of a good road. The people of other countries who have used bad roads and now use good ones are well satisfied that every dollar spent in this work is a good investment, and not one of them would tolerate the miserable dirt roads with which so many American farmers seem to be content.—Country Roads.

The Good Roads Tournament.

The racing board of the League of American Wheelmen has granted the dates Aug. 30 and 31 and Sept. 1, which are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, to the American Wheelmen as dates for its good roads tournament, which will be held in New York each year. The entire proceeds of this will go toward the agitation for good roads. Every attention will be given to the advertising of the tournament, and a collection of prizes which will interest all the racing cracks will be offered. Every effort will be made to get a team of Europeans to come over, and the promoters intend to make it the greatest tournament of the year. All the crack riders have signified their intention to take part, and a committee of prominent New York cyclists will be invited to act in the capacity of officials and custodians of the fund raised by the tournament. The races will be in the international circuit, as arranged by the racing board.

Good Roads Enhance Values.

A prominent farmer of Mecklenburg county has expressed the opinion that Charlotte's growth and improvement are largely due to the roads leading to the city and said that lands in his section had increased much in value in consequence of the better roads. He mentions two tracts which were bought last year, one for \$18 an acre, which was sold this year for \$25 an acre, the other for \$18 per acre, which sold for \$30. These figures serve but to strengthen the general belief that good roads do much for the towns with which they afford ready communication.—Charlotte (N. C.) Observer.

The Road We Want.

Old time unscientific roads are a thing of the past. The old handmade road, the sprawling, indiscriminate deposit of loose, broken stone, is out of date, and the smooth, compact road, scientifically built of material calculated to bear the wear and tear of heavy travel, is the one for the present and future.—R. E. McDaniel.

FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

New York Stock Market.

NEW YORK, April 20.—Chicago Gas was the special feature of the railway and miscellaneous speculation to-day. The sales of the entire list were 151,000 shares and of this amount Chicago Gas figured for 36,310 shares. The stock opened at 67 1/2, rose to 69 and closed at 68 1/2. The rise will be credited to manipulations and nothing of a definite nature was known as to the decision of the attorney general of Illinois, in the quo warranto case. St. Paul came next in point of activity, 28,700 shares having changed hands. The stock rose from 62 1/2 to 63 1/2 and was in demand by the shorts. London bought a little of the stock, having construed the March statement as favorable.

The fact that the engagement of \$3,000,000 gold for export failed to disturb long stock created considerable nervousness in the bear ranks, and a movement to cover set in. As a result prices moved up 1/4 to 1 1/2 per cent. The improvement being most pronounced in Missouri Pacific, Lead, Tobacco, Big Four, Northwest, Burlington and Quincy, Rock Island, Louisville and Nashville and Union Pacific. New England was heavy, declining 1 per cent. In the inactive stocks Consolidated Gas advanced 3/4 to 140@139 Interior Conduit and Insulation jumped 5/8 to 42 1/2 and Evansville and Terre Haute 3 to 68. The market closed firm and 1/2 to 1 1/2 per cent. higher than yesterday. Railway and miscellaneous bonds were strong. Sales listed: Stocks, 137,000 shares; unlisted, 14,000 Treasury balances: Coin, \$101,431,000; currency, \$50,151,000.

Money on call was easy at 1 per cent.; last loan at 1, and closing offered at 1 per cent. Prime mercantile paper, 3 1/2@4 1/2 per cent. Sterling exchange is firm, with actual business in bankers' bills at 48 1/2 for sixty days, and 48 1/2 for demand; posted rates, 48 1/2@48 3/4. Commercial bills, 48 1/2 for sixty days. Bar silver 63. Government bonds lower. State bonds dull. Railroad bonds strong. Silver at the board was neglected. Norfolk and Western preferred stock closed at 22 1/2.

Produce and Merchandise.

NEW YORK, April 20.—Flour steady, light demand; winter wheat, low grades, 2.00@2.45; patents, 3.25@3.50; Minnesota clear, 2.50@2.90; patents 3.90@4.45; low extras, 2.05@2.45; Southern flour, dull, steady; common to fair extra, 2.00@3.00; good to choice 3.00@2.20. Wheat dull, firm with options: No. 2 red, steady and elevator 62 1/2@63, softest 54; option dull and firm 1/2@1/2 advance; No. 2 red closed, April, 62; May, 63; June, 61.

Corn dull, firm; elevator 42@44, 45 soft; No. 2, ungraded, mixed, 44@45 1/2; steamer mixed, 44; options dull and unchanged to 1/2 down, closed firm; April, 44 1/2; May, 44 1/2; July, 45 1/2. Oats fairly active, options higher; April, 85; May, 37 1/2; July, 36 1/2; spot No. 1, 39; No. 2, white, 41; mixed Western, 39@40; white do., 40@45. Hay choice steady, quiet; shipping, 60@65; good to choice, 75@85. Wool fair demand, steady; domestic fleece, 20@25; pulled, 16@25. Beef steady, dull; family, 12@14; extra mess, 8@10; beef hams extra at 18; tierced beef dull; city extra India mess, 18@20. Cut meats firm, quiet; pickles, bellies, 7 1/2; shoulders, 6 1/2; hams, 10; middles nominal.

Lard quiet, steady; Western steam closed 8 1/2; city, 7 1/2; futures nominal; refined steady, continent, 8.40; South America, 8.80; compound, 6 1/2@6 3/4. Pork moderate demand, steady; mess, 14.25@14.50; extra prime, 13.00@13.50. Butter quiet, weaker; State dairy, new, 16@21; do. old, 11@17; do. creamery, new, 21@23; Western dairy, 11@15; do. creamery, new, 16@23; Elgin, 21@23. Cotton seed oil firm; crude, 30 bid; yellow, 33 1/2. Petroleum quiet. Rice dull, steady; domestic fair to extra, 3 1/2@5 1/2; Japan, 4 1/2@4 3/4. Molasses, foreign nominal; New Orleans open kettle good to choice, 30@38, dull, unchanged. Peanuts quiet. Coffee options quiet, 5 1/2@25 points down; May, 15.80@15.90, July, 15.30@15.40, September, 14.70@14.75, December, 14.10; spot Rio dull, easier, dull; No. 7, 17. Sugar, raw quiet, easier; refined quiet, steady; off A, 31.11@34; standard A, 4.11@4.16; 4 1/2; freight to Liverpool quiet, easy; cotton, 1/2 d; grain, 2 1/2 d.

P. E. THOMAS' BULLETIN.

The following quotations are furnished daily by P. E. Thomas, stock, cotton, grain and provisions broker, over Thompson's book store. Phone 166.

Table with columns: N. Y. stocks, Open, High, Low, Close. Includes entries for Union Pacific, C. & O., L. & N., Omaha, Mo. P. & N. E., N. Y. C., R. I., St. P., W. U., C. Gas, A. Sugar, Dist. & C. P., Gen. Elec., C. & N. W., N. Y. C., C. & St. L., Atchafalaya, N. & W., N. & W., Wheat, Corn, Lard, Pork, Cotton.

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