



CHAPTER XIX.

Of that night's fatal work the country-side remains in complete ignorance. Mr. Dysart's sudden death is heard of the following morning with a feeling of strong curiosity, but with none of regret. The funeral that takes place on the third day is small, certainly, yet, considering all things—the dead man's open hostility to his neighbors, and the dearth of hospitality that characterized his sojourn among them—larger than might have been expected, and at all events select. Among other Lord Riversdale attended—out of compliment, it was supposed, to Seaton, as he and the old man had never so much as seen each other's features.

But it was found impossible to conceal the existence of Sedley from the two girls. Peyton had undertaken to give them a rather careful account of what had happened; and in truth, when all was told, he was almost as much at sea about it as they were, as the stranger remained a stranger to him. Sedley had determined to reveal the secret hold he had had on Mr. Dysart to Seaton, thinking the latter would make good his father's promises.

It is in the old man's private den that he does this. Going up to the old-fashioned bureau he, by a subtle touch, unlocks the secret spring. The door falls back, the hidden shelves and their contents lie all unconcealed. Seizing upon a fast yellowing parchment, Sedley draws it out, and overcome by fatigue and excitement, drops upon his knees. Eagerly he opens and scans it, and then holds it out to Dysart.

"Compare that," says he, in a high tone of triumph, "with the will of your grandfather, that left all to Gregory Dysart, cutting out the elder son. Compare it, I say, and you will see that this was executed three years later than that other—that other which is now in force, and has been there twenty years."

Mechanically Dysart takes it. No word escapes him. Speech, indeed, is impossible to him, so busy is his mind trying to take in all the miserable dishonor of the story that as yet has but the bald outlines laid before him.

"No one knew of it but me," says Sedley, feverishly, yet with an undercurrent of delicious excitement in the recital. "But me and Grunch. What she made out of it no one can tell, as the old chap's gone, but she's as knowing a file in my opinion as you'd meet in a day's walk. You can see our two signatures. Eh, can't you read 'em? We witnessed it. We alone knew, and he bought us over. Well, 'twas worth a quid or two; 'tis a fine old piece."

Dysart makes no answer. He has supported himself against a table near him, and is gazing blankly, hopelessly, through the window at the dull landscape outside. He sees nothing, hears nothing, save the voice of the man who is speaking.

"'Twas felony, mind you, besides the fact of having to give up the money, and property, and all, so I know I could turn on the screw as tight as I liked. But," he laughs, "you see, I counted without my host. I never dreamed the old man would show fight like that. He took it hardly, my return—guess he believed me dead, and resented the breath in me—and I shouldn't wonder if, after all these years, he had got to believe the place, money and everything, was legally his own."

Still Dysart says nothing. He has indeed withdrawn his dull eyes from the scene without, and is now staring with unseeing eyes at the parchment that tells him how the property was never his father's, but was left to his uncle, and how his father suppressed the will, and kept the property in spite of law and honor, and all things that go to give a sweet savor to man's life on earth. It had never been his father's, all this huge property, it never would be his. And if not, whose? Vera's? He starts as if shot.

"Is that all?" he asks. "Well, no. Not quite. Your face says very politely that you'd be glad to see my back, but business first, pleasure afterward." He grins. "It is as good for us to come to terms now as later."

CHAPTER XX.

With the fatal will clasped in his hand, Dysart goes straight to the small morning room, where he knows he will be sure to find Vera. Twilight is beginning to fall, and already the swift herald of night is proclaiming the approach of his king. She starts slightly as he comes in.

"I am sorry to disturb you," says Dysart, with an effort at calmness, "but it was so necessary that I should come, that—"

"I am glad you have come. I, too, was anxious to see you," says Vera, a touch of nervousness in her tone. "If you must know it is impossible that we should stay here any longer. Our uncle, who was our guardian, is gone and—she has risen to her feet and is looking at him in sore distress—"I have wanted to speak to you about it for a long time; I thought, perhaps, you would help us to find another home." He can see that she suffers terribly in having to throw herself upon his good nature, to openly demand his assistance. "We must leave this, and at once," says she, stammering a little, and with a slight miserable break in her voice.

"You will not have to look for another home," says he; "this is your own house."

"Oh, no!" drawing back with a haughty gesture, "I have told you it is impossible. I shall certainly not stay here. As you will," quite as haughtily. "It will be in your power for the future to reside exactly where you please, but if the fear of seeing me here is deciding you against this place, pray be satisfied on that point; I have no longer the smallest claim to consider myself master here."

Warned by a change in his manner, Vera looks at him. "Something has happened?" she says, abruptly. "Yes; something I find it difficult to explain to you."

Still he manages to tell her all and to show her her grandfather's will—the will which his father had suppressed all these years.

"But this is horrible!" she says, faintly, when he had finished. "I won't have it!" She throws out her hands as though in renunciation. "Why should I deprive you of your home? Give me enough to live on elsewhere with Griselda, but—"

"You are quick to fall into error," says he, grimly. "I have begged you already to try to grasp the situation. It is I, it appears, I who—he hesitates, and after finding it impossible to speak of his father, goes on—"who have deprived you of your home. You must see that. I beg," slowly, "that you will not permit yourself any further foolish discussion on this subject."

He turns away abruptly. There is something so solitary, so utterly alone in his whole air, that without giving herself time for thought she springs to her feet and calls to him.

day, when the sound of carriage wheels on the gravel outside the window, the echo of a resounding knock, startle her out of her contemplated repose. "And how there is a lively quick rush through the hall, a springing step up the staircase, the rustle of silken skirts in the ante-room beyond, a voice that makes Vera start eagerly to her feet, and presently Mrs. Peyton, looking supremely happy, and, therefore, charming, flings herself into her sister's arms.

"Oh, I am too glad to be surprised," says Vera, fondly. "You're an imprudent person," says Mrs. Peyton, beaming on her from out the masses of furs that clothe her dainty form. "Grace telegraphed for us, to help her with a dinner party that is to come off to-night; so come we did. And, being so close to you, I felt I should see you or die!"

"It's selfish, I know, but I'm so glad to have you. Let me take off your furs. What a delicious coat! You hadn't that when I was down with you, eh?" "No. It's a new one. Tom gave it to me. He's absurd, but ever. But I haven't braved the elements to talk about him. It is about Seaton I want to tell you."

"Seaton? To come out such a day as this to talk of Seaton! But why? It must be something very serious," says Vera, changing color perceptibly. "Vera, I cannot help regarding us—you and me—as in part criminals. Poor, dear fellow, it must have been a blow to lose everything in one fell swoop. And yet what more could we have done than what we did do? To the half of our kingdom we offered him, but, as you know, he would none of us!"

"I know all that. We have discussed it a thousand times." "The face is, Seaton is leaving Eng and forever, and he has a desire, a longing he cannot subdue, and I'm sure, a most natural one, to see his old home before he goes."

"Well?" says Vera, coldly. "Well," in exactly the same tone, with a little mockery thrown in, "that's the whole of it. He wants to get a last look at the old place before leaving it forever. At least, that is how he puts it. Can he come? That is the question. I really think it would be only decent if you were to drop him a line and ask him. It would be the most graceful thing, at all events."

An hour later Griselda drives back to the Priory with the coveted note from Vera to Seaton in her hand. (To be continued.)

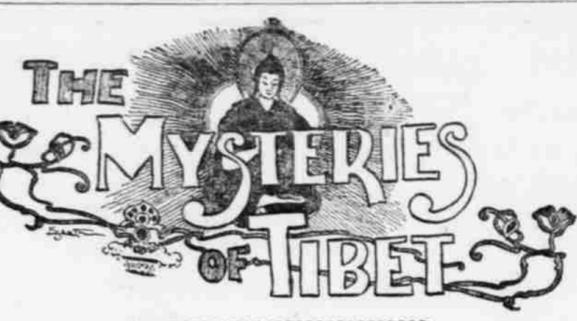
BREAD 1,800 YEARS OLD.

Loaves that were being baked when Pompeii was destroyed. Sufferers from indigestion are advised to eat stale bread; the staler the better, they are told. There is in the museum at Naples some bread which ought to be stale enough for anybody. It was baked one day in August, 79 A. D., in one of the curious ovens still to be seen at Pompeii.

More than eighteen centuries, therefore, have elapsed since it was drawn "all hot" and indigestible from the oven. So it may claim to be the oldest bread in the world. You may see it in a glass case on the upper floor of the museum. There are several loaves of it, one still bearing the impress of the baker's name.

In shape and size they resemble the small cottage loaves of England, but not in appearance, for they are as black as charcoal, which, in fact, they closely resemble. This was not their original color, but they have become carbonized, and if eaten would probably remind one of charcoal biscuits. When new they may have weighed about a couple of pounds each, and were most likely raised with leaven, as is most of the bread in oriental countries at the present time.

The popular idea that Pompeii was destroyed by lava is a fallacious one. If a lava stream had descended upon the city the bread and everything else in the place would have been utterly destroyed. Pompeii was really buried under ashes and fine cinders, called by the Italians lapilli. On that dreadful day in August, when the great eruption of Vesuvius took place, showers of fine ashes fell first upon the doomed city, then showers of lapilli, then more ashes and more lapilli, until Pompeii was covered over to a depth in places of fifteen and even twenty feet.



TIBET, the one land of mystery yet remaining in the world, has at last been invaded by the photographic camera. Every foot of Africa has been explored and that continent is now gridironed with railroads. The railroad also runs through the whole length of Northern Asia. But in the heart of Asia is one great mysterious, semi-savage land, guarded by stupendous mountains, from which the innovating white man is fiercely excluded. That is Tibet. It seems as if all the strangest and most fantastic customs on earth had taken refuge in this last retreat, for there one woman has many husbands, the ruler is a child who dies before he comes of age, the inhabitants wash themselves with butter and pray by machinery.

The attempts of the Tibetan government to keep foreigners absolutely beyond the borders of Tibet have not been entirely successful, but they have succeeded in keeping them away from the sacred white city of Lhasa, in the heart of the land. That is the holy of holies, the mystery of mysteries, where the Grand Dalai Lama dreams away his sacred, but brief existence. Explorers from time to time cross the wild mountain borders, but they must advance amid great natural difficulties and in face of a murderous population. The rulers at Lhasa hear of their coming months before they can reach the capital, and can make ample arrangements for murdering them.

When Henry Savage Landor crossed the frontier in an attempt to reach Lhasa, he was seized, tortured and barely escaped with his life. Mr. William Woodville Rockhill, the distinguished diplomat, lately special American envoy in China, has explored Eastern Tibet and written the most valuable modern account of the people and their customs. He did not try to reach Lhasa.

Tibet lies between India, Asiatic Russia and China. On the southern side are the Himalaya Mountains, the highest in the world, and the whole of Tibet consists of mountainous table land, rising 20,000 feet and more above the sea level. The inhabitants die of bilious fever when taken to a normal level. On the northern or Russian side are great deserts. The least explored part of China lies on the remaining side. Tibet has an absolute religious government or theocracy. The head of it is the Grand or Dalai Lama at Lhasa, who is supposed to be an incarnation of Buddha, but the real ruler is a person, curiously named "the Gyampo," or temporal chief. He, too, is a lama.

Years ago the lamas were not so anxious about excluding foreigners from their land as now, probably because they believed the visitors would reverence their greatness. It is one hundred and forty-one years since the Jesuit priests were expelled from Tibet, but even for many years after that it was not difficult for a foreigner observing the Buddhist religion to enter the country. In 1811 an Englishman named Manning entered Lhasa disguised as a lama, and in 1846 the French priests, Fathers Hue and Gabet, did the same thing. But since then no white man has seen the sacred city. Every one attempting to approach has been killed.

This fierce exclusiveness has naturally stirred civilized curiosity to the utmost and much information has been gathered from Asiatic Buddhists concerning the Sacred City. This curiosity has now received an unusual gratification in a remarkable series of photographs of the Holy City and its most holy places. These were all obtained by Asiatics. One of them was a Kalmuk chief named Ovche Novzounof, a Russian subject, and the other a member of the Nepal Embassy to China. Nepal is a native state between India and Tibet. These photographs confirm the most extraordinary statements that have been made concerning the place. The Potala or Grand Lama's abode is situated on a steep rock, about 1,500 feet high, and rises nine tall stories above that into the sky. The lower stories are occupied by the Gyampo and hundreds of Lamas, while the Grand Lama is hidden away at the top.

The Grand Lama, who is regarded as a reincarnation of Buddha, is usually chosen at the age of five or six. Under the influence of the Gyampo he dies of some mysterious malady at the age of fifteen or sixteen. His spirit then passes into another child. Fathers Hue and Gabet are the only white men who have left a description of the enthronement of a new Grand Lama. When one dies the Tibetans watch for a rainbow, and when this appears it is a sign of aid from Buddha. The lamas come out in procession and their oldest member says to them: "Your Grand Lama has reappeared in Tibet at such a distance from your Lamastery. You will find him in such a family."

The lamas go to the place named and there they find a child who always proves to be the true reincarnated Grand Lama. Doubtless all this business is arranged by the crafty Gyampo and his assistants. The poor little Grand Lama is conducted in triumph to the great palace outside Lhasa. There he is hidden in the top of a nine-story palace and never comes forth again. A bell announces to the world that the Grand Lama is installed in the sacred chamber. This enthronement is accompanied by ceremonies so strange and elaborate that it would require volumes to describe them. Each one of the nine stories is the scene of some symbolical and mysterious performance. The Tibetans say that the wealth of the Grand Lama in Potala is ten times that of the rest of the world put together. Outside Lhasa is the sacred grazing ground, where 300 brood mares feed, from whose milk a fermented liquor is prepared for the Grand Lama. A great temple of Lhasa contains the greatest image in the world, called the Jo-Vo, representing Buddha. It is 120 feet high, rises up through four stories and is covered with jewels.

About one-third of the population of Tibet consists of lamas, who dwell in lamasteries, or Buddhist monasteries. They possess practically all the wealth of the country and rule it absolutely. The lamasteries are situated in the most fantastic places, some on the tops of mountains, others on the sides of them, hanging over precipices so that one can only reach them by ropes. The noble philosophy of Buddhism is almost entirely lost among the degrading superstitions and mummeries of these lamas. Many of them do not know its elementary principles.

The lamas of a certain superior order have the strange custom of manifesting their power to die and come back to life. There is another equally interesting class of lamas known as Skookshoks. These are men who have attained such a pitch of virtue that they are fitted to attain Nirvana, the last reward of the Buddhist religion. But, instead of entering Nirvana, the Skookshoks consent to be reincarnated and live again for the good of their fellow men. When an old Skookshok is dying in the flesh, a newly born child is selected and the sacred one transfers his spirit to this child. The new Skookshok is then carried away to a Gompa, or retreat, where he dreams away his life in meditation. It is considered probable that the Mahatmas, about whom considerable has been heard in Europe and America, are really Skookshoks.

DIVERTING A RIVER COURSE.

Big Job of Engineering Undertaken by Uncle Sam in Colorado. In accordance with the policy recommended by President Roosevelt in his message to Congress, the United States government is taking its first step toward reclaiming the arid lands of the West.

One of the greatest engineering feats of modern times is already under way. The Gunnison river in Colorado is to be diverted from its course through a six-mile tunnel so that the stream shall irrigate the Uncompahgre valley. The result will be that a whole farming community will be reclaimed and a fertile district, now parched and dry for lack of water, will once more blossom as the rose.

When the Uncompahgre valley was settled a few years ago, abundant irrigation was supplied by the Uncompahgre river, but the cutting of the timber since then has caused the stream to shrink to a tiny creek. As a consequence the farms were deserted and the value of the land sank to almost nothing. Now, with the promise of a new water supply, the land has fairly leaped in price, and some of it is now held as high as \$300 an acre.

The work preliminary to starting the big tunnel has just been completed by the United States Geographical survey. It involved a trip across the Black canyon of the Gunnison, a district never before explored in its entirety by white men. A few years ago a party of explorers made the attempt, but they had gone only a short distance, when they lost all their boats and supplies and barely escaped with their lives.

Before setting out the government employes planned to have provisions lowered to them by ropes from above. So they started with as light an equipment as possible, only their surveyors' instruments, a camera, and a few necessary articles. It took them ten days to traverse the ten miles of their journey.

The poisonous properties of the toad have long been regarded as fabulous; but recent investigation has proved that the skin of a species of toad secretes a poison similar in action to digitalis. The venom of the toad has had the reputation of possessing poisonous properties from a very early period and was probably one of the earliest forms of animal poison known. The old tradition that King John was poisoned by a friar who dropped a toad into his wine was regarded as a ridiculous fable until some years ago, when it was discovered that the skin of the toad secretes a body the active principle of which "phrynia" is a poison of considerable power.

Nature Notes mentions a curious incident which was witnessed at Belper, a small town not far from Derby, England. Late one afternoon three rats were seen crossing a yard from the direction of the fowlhouse. One rat had a hen's egg between its fore legs and the other two, one at each end; that is, they were carrying in their mouths the other rat with its back downward. A day or two afterward the correspondent heard a squealing noise in the fowlhouse, more like that of a child than that of a rat, so he opened the door and there was a rat on his back, with the egg as before mentioned, and two others endeavoring to raise him and take him away.

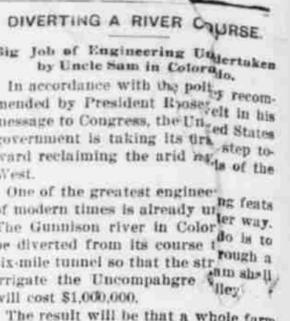
A member of the medical faculty of the University of Michigan has discovered that a galvanic current promotes the growth of tissue. Two cages of guinea pigs, six to the cage, were experimented with. The guinea pigs were all exactly the same age. Through one of the cages an electric current was passed day and night. The other cage was in no way electrified. For a stated period the animals in both cages were fed with precisely equal quantities of food of the same quality. The experiment proved that guinea pigs who lived in the electrified cage gained in weight during a measured time 10 per cent more than those in the non-electric cage. If, as a result of these experiments, electricity be applied on a large scale to the fattening of animals used as food possibly "electric bacon" or "electric beef" will command a special price.

The Winner. He eats potatoes with his knife. He speaks of "the old woman" when he makes a reference to his wife. But he receives salutes from men who have no time to notice me; His speech is rude and rough, he's cut from coarse material, and he has done the world no service—but He's making money.

Art is to him an empty word, To him the bard is but a jest; No graceful sonnet ever stirred Responsive chords within his breast; With elbows squared he crowds along. All ignorant of culture's laws, And gentle people in the throng. Stand back and bow to him—because He's making money. —Chicago Record-Herald.

Warrior. Jester—I met a man yesterday who has been through many battles. Jimson—Army officer? Jester—None, prize-fighter. —Ohio State Journal.

In many families, they don't have cream for breakfast, but have, instead, the top of the milk.



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