

# THE CHINESE CIRCUMLOCUTION OFFICE

ONE of the funniest happenings of late in China, if it were not likely to be fraught with so serious consequences, was the addressing of a conjoint note by the diplomatic

procrastinating diplomacy of the Flowery Kingdom during the 40 centuries and more of its existence. To understand how evasive and irresponsible it really is we must remember that there

en and is the visible connecting link between the people and the Supreme Being. But to assist him in the details of government, and probably to incidentally advise and promulgate his decrees, the emperor has a cabinet of four chief mandarins of the empire, and under them, again, are six official boards.

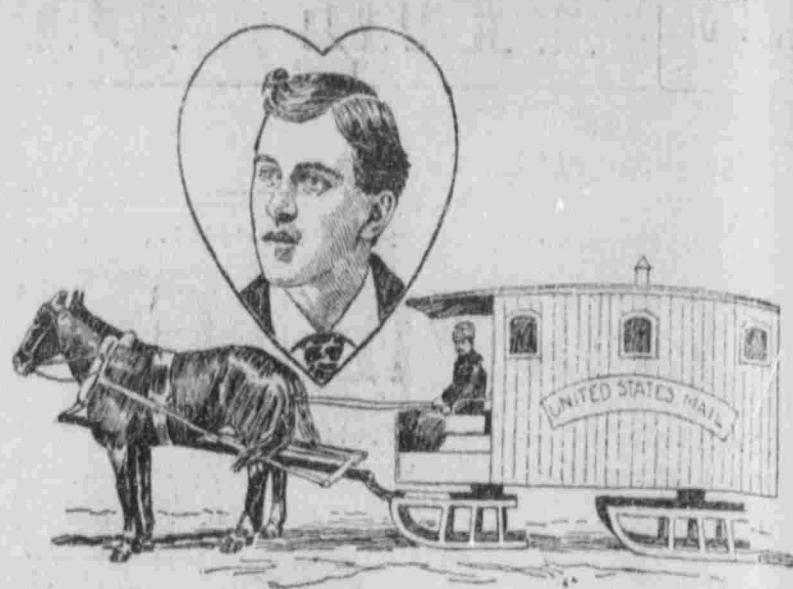
Then, again, the empire is divided into 13 provinces, each one being governed by a viceroy and staff of assistant mandarins, and the towns and villages have their own officials. As each head is responsible for his own actions and at the same time held strictly to account if things do not go in accordance with the imperial desires, it will be seen how loose are the ties that bind them together and yet how arbitrary and irresponsible the government.

If any trouble, like the recent uprising, occurs in any town or city, the local officials "blame it on" the governors; they, in turn, pass it up to the

**THE BRITISH MINISTER TO CHINA.**  
Sir Claude M. Macdonald, Great Britain's minister at Peking for the past five years, has recently been made a grand commander of the order of St. Michael and St. George, and it is universally agreed in England that he has earned his new dignity. A soldier and the son of a soldier, Sir Claude joined the Seventy-fourth highlanders as a youth and in 1882 served through the Egyptian campaign, being present at the great battle of Tel-el-Kebir. The war office rewarded him with an assignment to Cairo. After that he served his country at Zanzibar, Fernando Po and the Cameroons, where he gained that wily way he is credited with possessing as a diplomat, by which he was enabled to get the better of the estimable Li Hung Chang in a bargain for territory. In accordance with England's invariable rule that her representatives shall be well trained and the fact that a position in her diplomatic service means one for life, it is only natural for her diplomats to take the lead in international discussions.



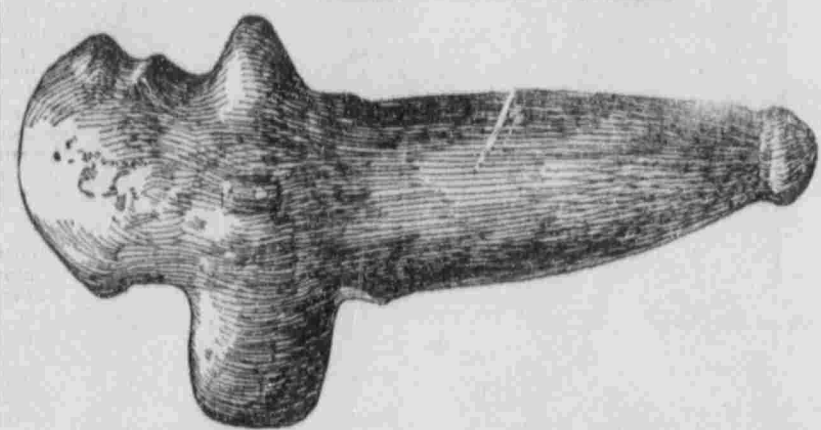
## A GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AT ONE CENT A YEAR.



It is a matter of general knowledge that Uncle Sam usually gets the full value of his money and always lets his contracts for carrying the mails to the lowest responsible bidder. This is how an enterprising young man—Mr. Frank Lynch of Mineral Point, Wis.—secured the mail route between his town and Dodgeville, eight miles distant, for the term of four years. He had to give bonds for \$1,000, and yet, though there were other bidders for the privilege, one at \$1.50, another at 99 cents and yet another at 48, he distanced them all with a bid of 1 cent a year!

Lynch lets out the secret by explaining that both Dodgeville and Mineral Point are good business towns, with considerable travel between them. As the mail carrier is allowed to take passengers, the mail coach is naturally given the preference by travelers.

## A FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR HATCHET.



A hatchet worth almost or quite its weight in gold has been brought from the West Indies to New York and is to find a resting place in the Museum of Natural History in that city.

It is the only specimen of its kind in existence and was found many years ago in the Bahamas, where it was for a long time in the collection of the late Spanish consul at New York, Mr. George Judson Gibbs.

When the talented Professor Joseph Henry was at the head of the Smithsonian institution of Washington, about 30 years ago, he heard of this specimen and requested Mr. Gibbs to lend it to him for the purpose of having a plaster cast and description made of it. After a critical examination he started, over the seal of the institution, his signature being certified to before her Britannic majesty's charge d'affaires at Washington, that this hatchet was worth, at the lowest calculation, \$500 in gold. As no specimen of the kind has been discovered since, it is quite reasonable to assume that it is not valued at less than that now.

## THE BRIDE'S VEIL.

The veil worn by modern brides is evidently of eastern origin and of great antiquity, being a relic of the bridal canopy held over the heads of both bride and bridegroom. Among the Anglo-Saxons a similar custom was in vogue, but it was dispensed with when the bride was a widow.

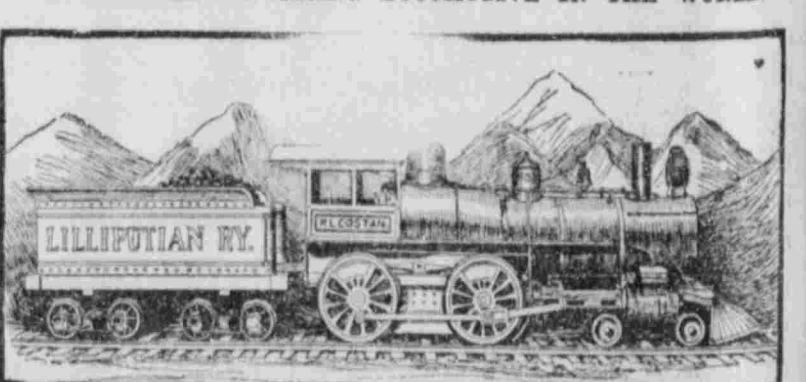
Brides in ancient Britain, whether princesses or peasants, used no veils but those provided by Dame Nature—their long hair. Only then did every one have a chance of seeing a girl's wealth of hair in its entirety, for after marriage it was braided up neatly upon the head, or, sometimes, even cut off. Russian brides used to be despoiled of their locks after the wedding was over.

## PUBLIC HOUSE RUN BY A PARSON.



Not far from Stratford-on-Avon, the home of Shakespeare, is a tavern that is actually owned and operated by a parson. The Rev. Osbert Morland, the rector of Hampton Lucy, is the distinguished publican who founded and now operates this establishment. He undertook the avocation of beer selling as an experiment and found that it was unexpectedly successful, so that now he often does a business of \$1,200 a year, which is very good for a small country inn such as "The Parson's Public House." The clerical tapster sells only the best of beer, and any profits that accrue from the flowing bowl are handed over to local charities.

## THE SMALLEST WORKING LOCOMOTIVE IN THE WORLD.



The popular belief that in America, more than in any other country, genius is stimulated to its greatest achievements finds fresh proof in the latest invention to attract public attention. This is the work of Mr. Robert L. Costen of Fort Worth, Tex., who, without any technical education or a single hour's instruction in a machine shop, has designed the most diminutive locomotive, perfect in every detail, that was ever built. This remarkable mechanism was constructed by its inventor at odd hours, in the intervals of his business as a diamond setter, and has proved a great success, drawing its train at the speed of 12 miles an hour.

The engine is the exact counterpart of an up-to-date eight wheel passenger locomotive. The little driving wheels are 6 inches in diameter and run on a track only 5 1/2 inches wide. It is 4 feet 7 inches long, 13 1/2 inches high and weighs but 175 pounds with coal and water aboard. The boiler pressure is 125 pounds, and if all the little tubes in it were put together end to end they would make a pipe 250 feet in length. The complete engine contains 2,500 pieces, the boiler 48 separate parts, and its construction necessitated the drilling of 1,734 holes and the setting of the same number of rivets. The steam gauge, upon which the inventor labored for six years, is three-quarters of an inch in diameter and registers accurately up to 200 pounds. Mr. Costen, who is a self made man, is only 23 years old. He sometimes issues to his friends annual passes printed from an engraved metal plate made out of the little boiler.



SCENES IN THE CHINESE FOREIGN OFFICE AT PEKING.

body at Peking to the tsung-li-yamen, calling upon it to suppress the Boxers, those turbulent rebels who have committed so many outrages upon the Christians.

This the tsung-li-yamen gravely promised to do, and then, after assuring their brother diplomats from foreign parts of their most distinguished consideration and untiringly by the implied threats of the recall of the legation guards if they did not comply, turned about (if current accounts are reliable) and assisted the rebels to the extent of their ability.

Now, the tsung-li-yamen, or central foreign office, is one of the latest inventions of the Chinese to assist them in involving the hated foreigners inextricably in the meshes of red tape, and, though less than 40 years have passed since it was established, it represents more than any other body the

is no actual board of officials under this title as an organized body, but that it is made up of the heads of various departments.

The source of government, of course, is the emperor, who is supposed to receive his directions straight from heav-

A body distinct from these is that known as the "board of censors," a sort of secret service detective bureau, which has ramifications all over the empire and brings its victims to the bar of "justice" by methods in vogue during the times of the inquisition.

viceroy, and they (though at the risk of losing their positions and perhaps their heads) refer it to the tsung-li-yamen, which generally disposes of it by the circumlocutory process, as already mentioned.

This supreme repository of red tape approximately represents our department of state, but consists of from 8 to 12 men taken from the boards and grand council, who get together semi-occasionally and air their opinions. If a request is proffered, they at once set about to find out how they cannot grant it, and if a foreign diplomat seeks an audience to avoid "kowtowing" to the emperor he is usually badgered out of his wits and made to feel that he is fortunate to escape with his honor intact.

In substance, the tsung-li-yamen is a sort of "buffer" devised by the astute Celestials to stand between the sacred person of the emperor and the outside barbarians and to mitigate the effect of contact with the indignant representatives of the powers. According to reports, the wily empress dowager has availed of it to formulate and put in effect her sinister schemes against all strangers in China and to promote that shuffling policy of evasion which has always been characteristic of Chinese diplomacy.

FREDERICK A. OBER.

## AN OCTOGENARIAN ARTIST.

When we find at this time, near the close of the century, one who was born in its second decade and, above all, one who has made himself famous and is still vigorous, we should not be slow to rise up and do him honor.

Such a man England is now honoring in the person of the veteran artist Carl



Haag, who, though 80 years old, is still wielding the brush and producing works that charm the eye as of yore.

A Bavarian by birth, but a Briton by adoption, a traveler throughout the arctic and painter of oriental scenes, he is a resident of England now and has been greatly enriched by that country in material and medals.

He has also received many decorations from foreign countries, including the order of the Medjidie, Royal Bavarian Cross of Merit and Legion of Honor.

## THE LITTLE MINISTER.

When in America, the late Dr. Berry of Wolverhampton spoke at a number of public meetings, including one at Chicago. At the close of the latter a lady rushed up to him and thanked him heartily for his address, but still more for his beautiful book, which she had read and greatly admired. "To which book do you refer, madam?" asked the doctor. "Oh, 'The Little Minister,'" said the lady, who had mixed him up in her mind with J. M. Barrie. "No," said Berry, who was not of great stature, "I did not write 'The Little Minister'; I am the little minister."

Perla has as yet no railroad systems, but the Russian syndicates appear to have secured contracts for the construction of railroads in that country.

## HOT WEATHER TOPICS.

The greatest height ever reached in a balloon was 26,000 feet. Two of the three aeronauts who made this ascent were suffocated.

A Koenigsberg doctor has succeeded in grafting a patient's second toe on his hand in place of an amputated forefinger. After the toe had been sewed on the stump of the forefinger primary

union took place, and the patient can move his new finger.

The original manuscript of the speech made by William H. Seward in favor of the admission of Kansas into the Union has been presented to the Kansas State Historical society.

Two hundred and ninety millions of dollars for poultry, the proceeds of one

year, compared with \$158,000,000 for hogs for the same time, tells with emphasis the enormous magnitude of the poultry business. We are still importers of eggs.

The people of Joplin, Mo., which is the commercial center of the Missouri-Kansas zinc and lead mining district, are talking of holding a great mineral exposition in the near future.

Indians are making rapid strides in

the paths of education. The Chickasaws have five colleges and the Creeks have ten. The Choctaws have no colleges, but have 100 common schools in which the higher branches are taught.

The expense of educating the Indians is borne by the Federal government. Two of the seven professors at the West Point Military academy were born at Akron, O., and were appointed from that congressional district—Colo-

nel Fleiberg, professor of engineering, and Colonel Edgerton, professor of mathematics. Cadet Lukes, of the graduating class of this year, is also from Akron.

It has been suggested that at the coming celebration at St. Louis of the acquisition of the Louisiana purchase some fitting honor be done to William A. Grow, whose work in the house has been, it is claimed, the chief source of

the marvelous development of the great territory added to the country by the purchase.

The Adirondack mountains embrace an area of over 2,800,000 acres, and in this great area fully 300 mountain peaks rise to altitudes ranging from 1,200 to 5,000 feet.

The clove supply of the world is produced on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, which constitute the principal

producing territory of the sultania. Cloves were at one time the only economic product supplied to foreign countries by Zanzibar.

An engineer employed by an American company who recently visited the Cerro del Mercado, in Durango, says that the iron in sight on this mountain is sufficient to furnish all the smelters of Europe with ore for a period of 200 years.