

A QUEER PEOPLE.

The more we see and hear of the Chinese, the more singular do they appear to us. In some respects they are favorable specimens of a high civilization; in others, they are downright idiots. Their remedial processes in cases of illness, and their post-mortem ceremonies are absurd to the last degree. We are told that when a Chinaman is ill, one of his friends goes to the temple of the god of medicine, familiarly known as the "doctor," and having first tickled the idol's ears, to secure his attention, proceeds to rub that portion of its bronze and wooden carcase corresponding to the afflicted part of the invalid. He then puts up in a red paper some ashes taken from a censor burning before the image, and carries them to the sick person's room, where they are worshipped daily until the latter recovers or "joins his ancestors." As it is supposed that his disease is caused by the enmity of some departed spirit, ten men are hired to become "security" for the patient. These ten bondsmen guarantee to the offended tenant of the land of shadows that the invalid shall do nothing further to offend him in case he is permitted to recover. If he dies the "ten kings of hell" are respectfully informed of his decease, with a view of propitiating their infernal majesties. In fact, coaxing, weeding, bribing and cheating the powers diabolical seem to be the principal objects of all "celestial" devotes. They have an eye to economy too, in their ceremonies for the benefit of the dead. Believing that the deceased may need funds and clothing in the other world, and that it will matter little in a future state whether his bank account is kept in redeemable money or "the queer," whether his garments are silk or shoddy, they sacrifice at his shrine forged paper and mock raiment. This is treating both the deceased and the gods rather shabbily, but it saves expense, and is supposed to answer the desired end. The Chinese are so fond of trickery that they take infinite pleasure in "shaving" the ghosts of their friends, and all their delirious and demon. Despite the disgusting absurdities of Buddhism and Taoism, the two principal religious creeds of the Chinese, we must not call them barbarians. They had printed literature when our progenitors roamed the wilderness clothed in the skins of beasts, and are said to have made gunpowder before the age of iron had commenced in Europe.—St. Louis Home Journal.

TRAINING HORSES.

Colts are left entirely too long before they are taken in hand for breaking in.—Their future life should be a part of their earliest education; instead of, as now, being left to goa they like until the times arrives for the professional breaker to practice on them. It is just as easy, while commencing to fondle and pet with them, to learn them to be obedient to the halter and other things; and they would then be brought to work more easily and with a better spirit than they now often are. We say at the close of the war a seven-year-old, which had hitherto known service only as a cavalry horse, broken in to go in a heavy wagon. The cruelty—it was nothing else, necessary though it seemed to be, was shameful. The owner had bought him for that purpose, and he would not pull. Two men with green clubs beat him for nearly an hour, during which time he broke the wagon and the gears nearly all to pieces in his rearings and layings down. He learned at last that all this meant he had to pull forward, and he ever after made an excellent driving horse. But all that suffering might have been avoided by a proper training when young. There are some horses like some men, whose nature is essentially vicious, and with whom the rod cannot be spared without spoiling the child; but with a proper training of the colt, it would be found in horse raising as in child raising, the old rules of kicking and cuffing will be oftener more honored in the breach than in the observance.—Philadelphia Press.


A LOST NATION.

A writer in the *Natal Mercury*, under date of February 2, 1899, says, when treating of the ruins of Simbae: "A day's march from Andowa, between two hills at the end of a vast and fertile valley, are the ruins of Axum. To this day incredible flights of stone steps conduct the traveler up to the summit of the hills, in one of which are found deep grottoes and vast hills, cut out of the rock and according to the traditions of the country, is the tomb of the Queen of Saba. The adjoining valley, shaded by majestic trees, is filled by the remains of the city, consisting of huge blocks of stone. Very little of the debris reveals their former purpose. There may, however, be distinguished two groups of fourteen or fifteen obelisks, thrown down. Seven of them are discovered with ornaments, and are not less than thirty-six feet in length. These masterpieces of ancient architecture reveal to us the fact of an ancient civilization in the heart of Africa, which has disappeared again thousands of years since. Niebuhr tells us of a mighty Abyssinian empire existing here, mentioning in particular, Saba, and says it was so powerful that even the Roman and Parthian strength could not prevail against it. This last statement was taken from a Greek inscription found among the ruins, engraved in stone. On the reverse side is another engraving in some ancient language, which has not yet been deciphered. The savage tribes guard these ruins with jealous care. No living animal is allowed to be killed in them, no tree permitted to be destroyed, everything connected with them being held sacred as belonging either to a good or evil power. A missionary who penetrated within a short distance of the ruins writes: "In this country were also found some very old guns, in a hole in the mountain. We got one of these guns, and found it to have a wheel outside, with cogs or teeth and a traction exists that they came from these ruins. The Basutos often tell us, when asked if they acknowledge God, about the big stones in the Banya, where all created things are to be seen—even sphinxes, pyramidal shaped buildings, and catacombs."

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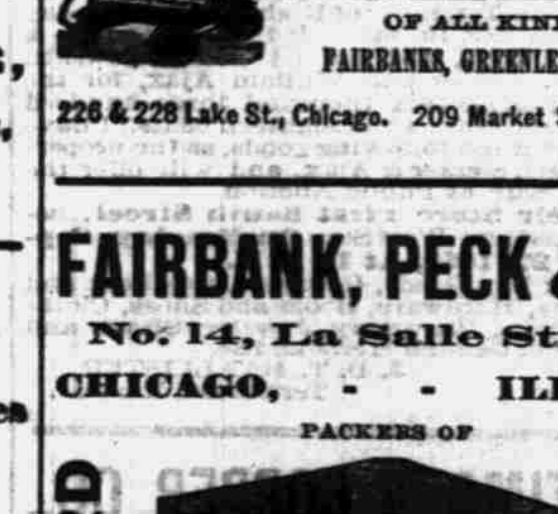
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