

Miscellaneous.

DEATH OF THE KING OF SIAM.

Letters from Singapore, dated on the 20th of January, announce the death of the Second King of Siam—whose name in full was, Pira Bart Somdet Pira Pawarendr Ramesr Mahiswarestr Pira Klau Chau Yu Hua. He had been in ill health five years, and in June last his disease began to assume a dangerous form. His remains were deposited in a golden urn, decorated with diamonds, and placed on a particular throne, and after the usual period of lying in state, according to the Siamese custom, were buried with great ceremony.

The King ascended the throne in 1851, his brother becoming "First King." Both were remarkable men; noted, pre-eminently above all the monarchs of the East, by their attainments and their love of progress. The enlightened spirit which prevailed in their councils encouraged the introduction of the foreign element, the development of internal resources, and the use of the modern inventions, and the arts and letters of the West. The Second King, especially, showed the liveliest interest in the great movements of the world, cherishing a hope of European and American Literature, opening his palace freely to foreign visitors, cultivating diplomatic relations with the nations of the West, contributing papers on scientific and political subjects to a little journal called the *Siam Times*, printed at Bangkok, half in English and half in Siamese, and subscribing for American newspapers and periodicals. His death is a severe loss to his kingdom.

WHY LAMP CHIMNEYS BREAK.

One of the most fruitful sources of annoyance to housekeepers, in these days of petroleum, when lamps have entirely superseded tallow "mould" and "dips," is the breaking of lamp chimneys. These accidents, if accidents they are, occur so frequently that the cost of keeping a supply on hand foots up a very considerable item in household expenses. Few persons know the reason of this breakage, and while some attribute it to carelessness on the part of domestics or members of the family, not a few blame the manufacturers. An article published in one of the English magazines on the fracture of polished glass surface, gives some information on the subject, which may be of advantage to our readers.

The writer says:—"It is a fact well known to the philosophical instrument makers that if a metal wire be drawn through a glass tube, a few hours afterwards the tube will burst into fragments; the annealed glass tubes used for the water gauges of steam boilers are sometimes destroyed in this way, after the act of forcing a piece of cotton waste through them with a wire, for the purpose of cleaning the bore. This will not happen if a piece of soft wood is employed.

The late Andrew Ross informed me that on one occasion, late in the evening, he lightly pushed a piece of cotton wool through a number of barometer tubes with a piece of cane, for the purpose of cleaning out any particles of dust. The next morning he found most of the tubes broken up into small fragments, the hard scilicet coating of the cane proving as destructive as he had previously known a wire to be.

Persons who have been in the habit of using wires, table forks, and a lot of metallic articles in the washing of these chimneys, will, in the above stated fact, find the reason of their chimneys so often snapping to pieces on the lamp.

A RELIABLE INFANT.—The Adrian (Mich.) *Expositor* relates the following incident:—A little girl about two years old, and a diminutive little thing at that, while playing with her brother, by some unaccountable accident, fell into a well about thirty feet to the water. The boy gave the alarm, and the mother running out discovered her little darling floating on the water. The bucket was down—it probably went with the child—and the mother, instead of wasting her energies in fruitless screams, caught the rope and swung back the bucket partially under the child. The little hands grasped the pail, and it was drawn to the top and rescued by the terrified but courageous mother. During its perilous journey out, it looked up and several times called out, "Mamma," "Mamma." A more thrilling peril and rescue seldom occurs, and, indeed, the whole thing is next to miraculous; but the facts are beyond cavil.

EDUCATION OF SEALS.

Captain Musgrave thus describes the methods of physical and mental education pursued by the maternal seals toward their young:

In the latter part of December and during the whole of January they are on shore a great deal, and go wandering separately through the bush (or woods,) and into the long grass on the sides of the mountains above the bush; constantly bellowing out in a most dismal manner. They are undoubtedly looking for a place suitable for calving in; I have known them to go to a distance more than a mile from the water for this purpose. Their voice is exceedingly powerful, and in calm weather may be heard to the almost incredible distance of four and a half or five miles. Why they bellow so much before calving I am scarcely able to judge; but after that event, which does not take place until after the first of February, it is undoubtedly to call their young, which they generally get into the water a few days after they are born, and assemble them in great numbers at some particular place, selecting such places as a small island or a neck of land with a narrow row junction. This, no doubt, prevents them from getting straggled about and lost, as they do sometimes in the bush; while in these places they cannot very well get away without going into the water, to which, when very young, they have a great antipathy.

The means employed by the cow for getting her young into the water for the first time, and taking it to a place of safety, is when witnessed highly amusing. It might be supposed that these animals, even when young, would readily go into the water, that being one of their natural instincts; but, strange to say, such is not the case; it is only with the greatest difficulty, and a wonderful display of patience, that the mother succeeds in getting her young in for the first time. I have known a cow to be three days getting her calf down half a mile, and into the water; and what is most surprising of all, it cannot swim when it is in the water. This is the most amusing fact; the mother gets it on to her back, and swims along very gently on the top of the water; but the poor little thing is bleating all the time, and continually falling from its slippery position, when it will splutter about in the water precisely like a little boy who gets beyond his depth and cannot swim. Then the mother gets underneath it and it again gets on her back. Thus they go on, the mother frequently giving an angry bellow, the young one constantly bleating and crying, frequently falling off, spluttering, and getting on again; often getting a slap from the flipper of the mother, and sometimes she gives it a very cruel bite.

The poor little animals are very often seen with their skins pierced and lacerated in the most frightful manner. In this manner they go on until they have made their passage to whatever place she wishes to take the young one to; sometimes they are very numerous at these places, their numbers being daily augmented until the latter end of March. Here the young remain without going into the water again, for perhaps a month, when they will begin to go in of their own accord; but at first they will only play about the edge, venturing farther by degrees; and, until they are three months old, if surprised in the water, they will immediately run on shore and hide themselves; but they always keep their heads out, and their eyes fixed on the party who has surprised them, imploring mercy in the most eloquent language that can be communicated by these organs.

LUMBER BY THE MILE.—The *Pittsburg Dispatch* says: "A large amount of lumber is now reaching the city. It is stated that in the 'pool' at Bethlehem, Clarion county, there are now lying no less a number than five hundred lumber rafts destined for Pittsburg, and that so completely is Red Bank Creek, in Jefferson and Clarion counties, filled with rafts, that one can walk from Bethlehem to Brookville, a distance of about fifteen miles, without having occasion to step off the rafts at any point.

LEMON JUICE IN DIPHTHERIA.—Doctor Revillout, in a paper presented last summer to the French Academy of Medicine, asserts that lemon juice is one of most efficacious medicines which can be applied in diphtheria, and he relates that when he was a dresser in the hospital his own life was saved by its timely application. He got three dozen lemons and gargled his throat with the juice, swallowing a little, at the same time, in order to act on the more deep-seated parts. Dr. R. has noted eleven cases of complete success, obtained by this method of treatment.

CONQUERING AN ELEPHANT.

After the regular performance at Forpaugh's circus and menagerie, Tenth and Callowhill streets, on Saturday night, a novel and exciting scene was presented to a number of persons who were allowed to remain in the building. The fit of madness which has rendered the great elephant Romeo, now on exhibition with the show, totally unmanageable for a week past, has already been noticed in these columns, and also the attempts of his master, Mr. Craven, to pacify the huge beast without resorting to extreme violence. This elephant is the largest one in this country, weighing over five tons, and standing nearly ten feet high. The inclosure now occupied by Romeo measures about twenty-eight feet square. When signs of ill-humor first become apparent the beast was secured by chains so that he was kept about midway in the space. In that position there was no possibility of the elephant doing further damage than to occasionally raise with his head a girder that sustained several tons weight. The influence usually exercised over Romeo by Mr. Craven is certainly wonderful, and the ready obedience and sagacity of the beast has, perhaps, never been surpassed by any other performing elephant in the United States.

The first bad treatment to which the furious Romeo was subjected was stoppage of his daily food, a measure which however unpleasant it might be to the offending beast, was undoubtedly favorable to the purse of his keeper. For seven days nothing whatever was given the elephant to eat or drink, and he remained upon his feet the whole time casting his trunk restlessly about, while his keen eye flashed the fiery spirit that governed him. No person dared venture within his reach without increasing his disposition to be violent.

Anything whatever within the reach of his trunk was made a weapon of offense, and several bricks lying in his way were taken up and thrown with great force to the extremity of the building. Mr. Craven closely watched his prisoner during the entire time, and when escape was threatened, a rifle was brought into use and its contents fired into his head. During the few days of trouble no less than a dozen loads were discharged at Romeo, one of them destroying his right eye, an accident which greatly distresses Mr. Craven, but its result is acceptable, as by no other means could the life of the favorite little elephant, Juliet, have been saved.

After every means which had been tried to enforce obedience had failed, Mr. Craven determined to subdue him by throwing him from his feet, and about ten o'clock on Saturday evening the effort was commenced. Tackle sufficient to rig a small sized ship was brought into use, and made fast to the chains, bound round the feet of Romeo, and then attached to heavy stakes driven in the ground about thirty yards distant. It required much trouble to get the animal into the desired position, and to intimidate Romeo two rifle shots were fired, one entering his trunk and the contents of the other flashed off his side as if it had struck upon a rock. About fifty men took hold of the ropes attached to the elephant, and in a short time his feet were so drawn together that a few pulls upon a line at the side laid Romeo fairly upon the ground. The yells of the infuriated beast, as he was being conquered, was terrific, and for a few moments an unearthly chorus was kept up by the numerous other animals. After being compelled to remain upon his side during the night, Romeo was released, and subsequently went through his usual performance in the ring with readiness and submission. The elephant is now as docile as ever he was, the only evidence of his late bad humor being the loss of an eye and scars with which he is marked.—*Philadelphia Press*.

THE BRITISH BUDGET.—Some of the London papers are dissatisfied with the estimates for the military service, because the reduction is only £10,000 in all. But the *Patriot* comforts itself by saying that "the army is gradually disbanding itself, recruits are not to be got on existing terms, and that will be increasingly the case as the intelligence and prosperity of the laboring classes increase." Pretty soon emigration will be found to tell in the same direction.

Two young Russian women are at present studying medicine at the University of Zurich, and show, it is stated, much aptitude for that profession.

An association has been formed in Berlin to promote the industrial employment of women, especially of those belonging to the middle classes.

PHOTOGRAPH POISONING.—Two little children, a boy and girl, belonging to Henry Bishop, who lives on Paulina street, Chicago, while playing with photographs, were seen to have them in their mouths. By sucking poison from the cards they were so injured that the boy died, and the girl's life is despaired of.

NATURAL SNOWBALLS.—An interesting phenomenon occurred in England, March 8th—a fall of water in a semi-solid state far denser than snow, yet not hail nor ice; in short, natural snowballs. A correspondent of the *London Times* writes that about two and a half inches of these balls gave one inch of water; therefore their density was about half that of hail, and five times that of ordinary snow. Their shape was usually pyramidal, the base being uneven, somewhat like the flower of a cauliflower. The size varied from one inch in diameter down to a tenth; about two-tenths was most usual.

THE LION'S PAW.—A delicate, soft, harmless-looking foot is this, with a beautiful fringe of fur round the edge; but what do we see under this fur? Snugly concealed, like riflemen in ambush, are those dread claws, which, when extended, and intent on blood, will tear furrows an inch or more deep in the thick skin of a buffalo or giraffe, or hold the powerful eland with a vice-like and deadly grasp. Then, again, remark the soft velvet-like pads which fill up the hollow of the foot (the largest pad being four inches broad). Has human ingenuity ever contrived, or ever will it contrive, any such elastic, firm, yet noiseless material, which shall enable the wearer to steal up with a ghost-like motion upon the unsuspecting prey, be he ever so wide awake? We strip the skin from the foot, exposing the tendons (or leaders), which though beautifully white and rounded, possess the strength of the twisted ironwire rigging of a ship, and work with the ease of a greased rope in a well-worn pulley. We admire their excessive complexity, yet their admirable arrangement; and tracing them up to the actual claws or talons, perceive how marvelous, yet simple, is the arrangement by which these formidable and lethal weapons are, without effort on the owner's part, made to retract into a secure place of protection, and their sharp points to be sheathed like a dagger in its scabbard. Doubtless the inventor of the india-rubber spring, which spontaneously closes the door of our dwelling-room, thought he made a great discovery, but he is probably not aware that in the lion's foot he may find the pattern of his invention registered by Nature herself.—*F. Buckland*.

ROME "WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION."—The *Courier du Pas de Calais* says:—There exists at Calais a nunnery of Franciscans, or disciples of St. Francis d'Assise. A young lady, belonging to one of the most honorable families of this city, having taken the perpetual vows, was confined with the rest in this convent. Two years since her father, being attacked by serious illness, requested that this young girl might be allowed to see and console him in his last moments. But the Abbess opposed all sorts of difficulties, appealing to the laws of her monastic order. The negotiations were laborious and long protracted. When the nun at length obtained permission to visit her aged father it was too late; she found him dead. This was not all. On the 27th of January last the mother fell sick in her turn, and importunately requested the presence and the filial care of her daughter. The permission was granted, but only for a few hours. On the evening of the same day the nun received an order to return immediately to her convent. She was constrained to abandon her mother in her agony; and 36 hours afterwards that mother expired, without having, on her death-bed, the comfort of her daughter's presence!

THE LARGEST DESCRIBED SNAKE.—Mr. Speke, in his work on the discovery of the source of the Nile, thus describes the death of a snake of the boa species, shot by his traveling companion, Capt. Grant: "I shuddered as I looked upon the effects of his tremendous dying strength. For yards around where he lay, grass and bushes and saplings, and in fact everything except the more fully grown trees were cut clean off, as though they had been trimmed with an immense scythe. This monster, when measured, was 51 feet 2½ inches in extreme length, while round the thickest portion of its body the girth was nearly 3 feet; thus proving, I believe, to be the largest serpent that was ever authentically heard of."