

SMOKING ROOM GOSSIP ON BOAT CARRYING MR. TAFT

Seventeen Nationalities Represented on Board the S. S. Minnerota and the Yarns They Tell are Both Interesting and Speculative—Tales of Adventure in Every Clime.

Special Correspondence.
A BOARD S. S. MINNEROTA, Sept. 25.—"O east is east and west is west," chants Kipling. But the east and west are not so far apart as they seem. The east and west are not so far apart as they seem. The east and west are not so far apart as they seem.

Trans-Pacific voyaging draws together communities of strange peoples, the like of which one never encounters on the land. The east and west are not so far apart as they seem. The east and west are not so far apart as they seem. The east and west are not so far apart as they seem.

They converge into the funnels, rub shoulders in the genial democracy of the smoking room, or the promenade deck, each expanding and gaining knowledge from the other by attention. They stream to the varied points of the compass at the end of the voyage, some on business, others on pleasure, and all exceedingly unlikely ever to meet again.

MOTLEY SHIP COMPANY.

Counting the crew, which is Chinese to a man, saving the officers, 17 nationalities are represented on the roster of the Minnerota's company. They range from Americans, native born, through Malays, Koreans, Filipinos, French, Dutch, Swedes, Japanese, Russians, Danes, Algerians, Burmese, Egyptians, Italian and a half dozen other nondescript representatives of not easily detected racial divisions. The atmosphere of the smoking room is cosmopolitan.

In one corner sits a captain of the Russian navy, conversing in French with a Frenchman, who has been proselyting in the United States and is traveling homeward, accompanied by several female disciples and a pair of drowsy-eyed young men—his secretaries, he calls them.

The Baba has deposited his partitioned urban within the zone of the civilized influence of a Scotch and Englishman, while a big black cigar hangs loosely from his fat, brown fingers. His flowing mustache-colored robe ripples and flows over a pair of American trousers, testifying to the fact that he is a Scotchman.

In a way he is as genial a Baba as one would wish to meet, if one could only eliminate from the perspective the long hair and the band of woman zealots whom he is leading into the unknown. The Baba, by the way, is a prototype in light mahogany of William Jennings Bryan. Their features are strikingly similar, and the Baba is quite as ready a talker as the statesman from the Platte.

A tiny Filipino judge, squinting at the world curiously through thick-lensed glasses, occasionally drops a word of inquiry or dissent, in Spanish or English, which the Baba obligingly translates for the benefit of the Russian soldier.

The Russian, by the way, has been

marooned for nearly two years well up toward the peak of the world's roof in northern Kamchatka, about opposite Alaska. He is ordered home long ago and told that a Russian gunboat would come for him. There haven't been many Russian gunboats at liberty for sea service on the high seas since the Japanese-Russian war, so the captain vainly waited and blew upon his cold, blue fingers through two summers, and a winter of the vile Kamchatka climate. Finally deciding that if the gunboat wouldn't come to him he would go to St. Petersburg to see about it, he risked his life crossing from Kamchatka to Alaska in a small sailing craft. Thence he coasted to Seattle, and will go to St. Petersburg by way of Yokohama, Vladivostok and the Transiberian.

SOME OF THE AMERICANS.

Coleman George R. Colton, just returned from fighting San Domingo from the depths of financial miseries, at the behest of the president, is bound by the law to take charge of the customs of the islands. Across the little round table from him sits the lean, scholarly face and the pointed gray beard of Thomas H. O'Brien, of Grand Rapids, the newly named ambassador to Japan. The little man whose short legs swing inches free from the floor as he delivers himself energetically of reminiscence and anecdote like a whole battery of after-dinner orators is Judge Thomas Burke, of Seattle. If he and brave Andrea Carnegie should come face to face each would believe himself to be looking into a mirror. The same set of plans and specifications served for both.

Judge Burke, who is going around the world as chief factor of interest in the Alaska-Tahiti exposition of 1909, with great interest how he determined the outer walls of the Peace conference in New York last spring. Ticketless and without credentials, the doorman took one look at him, summoned an usher and ordered him to "show Mr. Carnegie to a box."

Soft-shod Wong, the Chinese barboy, euphemist to the denizens of this babel, discerned the judge's other evening, and mislabeled a tiny and a fat cherubine at the judge's elbow, instead of the green mint which he ordered. The judge's expression of horror when the laughter of the multitude apprised him of what he had done was worth one of his funniest stories.

The joke again was on Judge Burke the first night out from Seattle. Salting from his stateroom he nearly bumped into a lady clad in a dressing gown, with her hair in a braid down her back. The judge modestly retreated. Again venturing forth he encountered another lady, similarly attired, and also with braided hair. The same thing happened a third and a fourth time. On the fifth attempt the judge caught a glimpse of the lady's face. The lady was a Chinese boy. So were the other four. The ladies' dressing gowns were the boys' white ones, and which they don to serve dinner in. The ladies' braided hair were the boys' pig-tails.

SAIT LAKER ALSO.

Judge J. C. McNally, sometime of Pittsburgh and Utah, is going out to Nanking as consul general, coming all a great and consuming curiosity as to Nanking and the attractions it offers as a residential city. He has had his doubts since the Wise Man of the East, who has been trotting in and out of Chinese and Japanese ports for years, and knows their streets and byways as he knows Broadway above Thirty-fourth street, said coldly and dispassionately upon being presented to the judge: "So you're going to Nanking."



STRIKE CRISIS AVERTED.

The looked-for friction between the Amalgamated Society, the largest trade union, and the lesser organizations has been settled.

The railway organizations which were threatened are:

Amalgamated Society	100,000
Engine Drivers and Firemen	13,000
General Railway Workers' Union	8,000
Pointmen and Signalmen	3,000
Railway Clerks	10,000
Telegraph Clerks	500

Total 134,500

On Nov. 5, the day before the conference of the railway men with the president of the board of trade, there was an ominous conference at Cannon Hall, in which the parliamentary committee, the Independent Labor party, and the General Federation of Trade Unions got together and talked things over.

More pay, fewer hours and better conditions, a strike of the railway men of Great Britain would mean paralysis of industries, riots, bloodshed perhaps, and probable starvation conditions in the inland towns where food supplies amount to only two or three days' provisions for the large population.

Action by Lloyd George, M. P., and Richard Bell, secretary of the Amalgamated unions, saved Britain from a big strike.

eh? Well, there's nothing but missionaires and consuls there."

Real, red haired and pug-nosed of jaw, owner of the liveliest quirkiness in the east—and thank him it's not any livelier, for if it was a weekly I'd have to work four times as hard—can be induced to yarn, on occasion, of some of the eight and odd battles and skirmishes in which he participated when his regular assignment was "going the rebellion" in Cuba for a New York newspaper. What chapters of history, not all rounding to the glory of the Cubans and their generals, are directly sleeping their mischievous living lives away in Red's hard head.

TALES OF THE TRAVELERS.

And the talk that goes round, when the dinners are being digested, and the doors and ports are barred to the howling northwestern gales that have made the passage a terror? The talk is as fascinating and suggestive of the great mysterious remote places of earth, as the odor of joss sticks is when it blows into the nostrils and whiskers of the brain of the languor, of the subtlety of the romance of the cold devilishness of the chicanes, of the heart-touching secrets of the east.

Frank Nichols died in a lamassary in Thibet, died alone and half the length of the circle of moths earth from that Park Row whence he sucked in the inspiration that determined him upon a desperate, half-brained sortie at the things that have been hidden in Thibet since time began. Pro and con the discussion pendulums as to whether death came to him in the guise of legitimate fever, or lung-tearing malarial bred of the bitter winter of eastern Thibet, or whether he was foully speared to his death by treacherous Thibetan fanatics.

Tales run trippingly of Cuba's past and future, of the warring of Gen. Jose Miguel Gomez, how brave Maceo charged the Spaniards in a suicidal sortie and plunged from his horse at the touch of a cut-throat of a Mauser bullet; of how a certain exiled Cuban politician, who must be nameless here, owed a Havana bank \$20,000 and repudiated half the debt, how the frothing American manager of the bank, perforce, submitted, when it was represented to him that a seeker for political preferment in Cuba required no higher endorsement than that he had done an American bank out of money, of the Yoshikawa and red, roaring night in Tokyo, of war between Japan and the United States, which easterners unitedly declare must come, of the discomforts of inter-island travel in the Philippines, of the relative excellencies of the Butterfield and Swire and the Jardine and Matheson steamers; of the American interests in China, and the impossibility of the United States standing aloof while the wolfish powers set themselves ravenously to the dismemberment of China, of the accepted belief in the determination of Russia and Japan to split the Manchurian jackpot, of Japanese craft and Chinese honesty; of big game hunting in Africa; of—but books might be filled with merely the skeletons in this treasurehouse of narrative, of international politics and policies, of private and public scandals that rattle and rattle madly under the nose of the Minnerota's smoking room.

Occasionally, Mr. Taft emerges from the maritime office of the secretary of war, which he has established in the sitting room of his suite, or hails from high-reducing barges of the dock and jumps the circle. His contributions usually are confined to appreciative laughs, but not seldom the "That reminds me" springs to his lips, and he yawns for a period with the others.

Thus he relaxes, for a portion of each day of his voyage has been devoted to his official duties. There is much an industrious secretary of war may accomplish, even though divorced from his desk by the span of a continent and an ocean, and Mr. Taft does it.

At a Glance.

In Saxony a horseholder must qualify by examination.

England has an organization for the promotion of goat culture.

A Spanish bull fighter sometimes gets \$200 for a single performance.

It costs over \$100 to fire a single shot from one of the largest guns used in the French army.

The ears of a child seldom change as it develops into an adult, but after middle age they sometimes grow larger.

Over 75 per cent of the natives of India till the land, hence the population is stationary, and their power of co-operation is greatly lessened.

Only the smaller birds of prey are used in Asia for falcon hunting. The sport is in great favor with eastern sovereigns.

One of the greatest markets in the world for musical instruments is South Africa, which spends on an average \$1,000,000 a year, about \$500,000 of which goes into pianos.

Piedmont, Italy, produces about three times as many cocoons as any other Italian province, and in proportion to its size is perhaps the most prolific silk worm district of the world, the yield during 1906 amounting to 11,447,467 pounds, with a value of \$3,848,154.

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