Hard to Picture Orient Without the Date Tree

For untold ages the date has been a staple article of diet in the Orient. It is said that a half-pound of dates and a half-pint of milk make a sufficient meal for a person of sedentary habits. The date needs milk to round out its food balance. An intensely hot climate and plenty of water are necessary for the production of dates. As an old Arabian saying goes: "A date palm must have its head in fire and its feet in water." Some believe that when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, they subsisted very largely upon the date. In fact, that part of Mesopotamia which produces to this day the best dates is regarded as the probable site of the Garden of Eden. Archeologists, in making excavations in this region, have uncovered ruins thousands of years old, among which have been found broken sculptures of the date palm, together with references to the use of its fruit as a food. According to an old, old Arabian story, after God had created Adam, some of the soil clung to His hands and He molded it into a date palm. The leaves were set in a feathery crown at the top the same as He created man. So it is only natural that the palm should be as nearly perfect a tree as Adam was a human being.

Seam of Burning Coal Keeps Mountain Warm

A unique Australian phenomenon is the "Burning Mountain" at Wingen in northern New South Wales, which scientists say has been on fire 1,000 years.

According to a party of geologists, who have just returned from an exploration of the mountain, says an Associated Press dispatch from Sydney, there lies below the surface a burning coal seam. Long before European settlement in Australia "Burning Mountain" was known to the aborigines, and to them it owes its name, Wingen, signifying "fire."

The geologists report that the summit presents the appearance of the debris of a vast block of buildings consumed by fire with an explosion or two thrown in. Smoke and steam continuously are issuing from different points, and there are numerous depcsits of alum and sulphur.

The burning seam probably is 30 feet or more in thickness, say the geologists, and is being consumed at the rate of from 120 to 130 yards each century. The warmth of the mountain in winter time attracts cattle, horses, and wild animals.

Gems Always Desired

Brilliant objects have always inspired man with a passion for their possession, and precious stones have occupied an important position on account of their form and color. The history of gems runs parallel to that of humanity and has been associated with the development of religion and science from the most remote times. Their connection with the church can be traced from the offerings of jewels in temples of the pagan gods to their place by the end of the Fifteenth century as the chief possession of the "treasury" of Christian churches.

Authentic Giantess

Ella Ewing, known as the Missouri giantess, was born in Scotland county, Missouri, of normal parents, and at birth weighed 6½ pounds. She grew abnormally between the ages of 8 and 22 years until she reached the enormous height of 8 feet 4 inches. She wore a number 24 shoe. It took 30 yards of silk to make a dress for her. When she stopped at hotels two ordinary beds had to be placed side by side so she could sleep across them. She made a fortune traveling about on exhibition and died at the age of 40 years.

Grades of Ebony

Ebony is the wood of a number of related trees, found in nearly all parts of the tropical world. Its northernmost range is northern Bengel, in India, and in localities of similar latitude and climate. The best grades are from a certain species native to southern India and Ceylon. Another much appreciated variety is from Madagascar. Other places where ebony grows are in Africa, especially Angola; in the East Indies; and, the poorer Jamaica variety, in the West Indies.

Clever and Dangerous

The centipede abroad in eastern lands is a formidable, and often poisonous, insect, but its wisdom might well instruct human beings of every age and clime. Afraid of the tarantula (a species of great spider), the centipede always takes care to build a cactus fence round itself ere it goes to sleep. It is most entertaining to watch the security of the centipedes as they lie at ease, while their arch-enemies cannot crawl over the cactus, which they will never tackle.

The Peaceful Celt

Two County Cork boys were in a mopping-up party that had followed the main assault. In a large shell hole they found a group of ten or twelve Germans sound asleep, apparently missed by the first wave.

"Well," said Sean, "shall we shoot 'em or stick 'em?"

"Ho, hum," said Denis, looking up at the sky, "it's a foine day. Let's wake 'em up and have a foight."—Pullman News.

TIRED OF BEING JUST "AND WIFE"

(© by D. J. Walsh.)

". . . and wife," repeated Lois Seaman bitterly as she threw the morning paper from her. "Eugene Seaman—and wife."

She rose from her chair and started to pace the floor. "They could at least have said Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Seaman. Three years ago they were mighty glad to say 'Miss Lois Morgan' when I was really doing something—known to the reporters as head of the women's department of the National bank, president of the Women's club, but now, I am just—'and wife!' No identity—I hate it."

She went back to the big chair before the fireplace and covered her face with her hands.

"I want to do something. I want to make a mark in the world—why can't Gene see it? Barbara and May can take over the house—I have brains—I want to accomplish—do something besides see there is plenty of food in the ice box and that the corners are not dusty and that Gene's clothes are pressed when he is toastmaster at a banquet where he can stand up and let people know he is accomplishing something—not standing still. Oh, I hate it—I hate it."

There was a sound of a door opening and some one whistled in the hall. Lois puckered her mouth to reply, but the whistle did not come. She sat up quickly, wiped her eyes and smiled at her husband as he came into the room.

"Hello, Gene. Aren't you home early?"

"Knocked off for some golf, Loey. Want to run out to the club with Glover and me?" He stopped short. "What's the matter? You've been crying."

"Nothing. I don't care to go out today."

"Why have you been crying, Loey?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask me. I—I am—so unhappy, Gene, doing—accomplishing nothing! I—I want to be more than just—'and wife.' And she reached over and picked up the morning paper from the floor. She pointed her finger at the article and he read aloud:

"Among the guests present were Dr. and Mrs. Davidson Wynne, the Hon. Theodore and Mrs. Benton, Eugene Seaman, the well-known criminal lawyer, and wife—"

He looked down at her as he folded the paper quietly and placed it on the table. "Are you crying because it does not say, 'formerly Miss Lois Morgan, president of the Women's club and head of the women's department of the National bank, well known for her splendid work in—'"

"Gene, stop! You are laughing, and I won't have it. Oh, can't you see? I want to do something—climb—accomplish—work—live! I want the contacts I used to have."

"I have tried to see from every angle, Loey, but—I cannot! You have a position—the greatest position in the world a woman can fill, that of—wife—home-maker—and I had hoped, mother. I am sorry I have not been able to make your position more agreeable; make you happy, although you will admit I have tried."

He sat in an easy chair, bending forward, his thin, capable hands clasped between his knees. His eyes traveled slowly over the splendid big living room; the soft-piled rugs, glistening mahogany; soft-shaded lamps, and they came back to rest tenderly upon the slender, pretty woman curled in the corner of the davenport, her head resting against her arm.

"I am sorry, sorry, that I have failed, Loey."

"You—you haven't failed, Gene. You are wonderful—but—but I should not—you should have married Bernice Mallory, Gene."

"But I didn't love Bernice, Loey. I loved you." He sat down beside her and took her hands in his.

"I do not feel that I have the right to stand in the way of your happiness, dear. I remove all my objections to your taking your old position back, on condition you will—stay married to me."

Her arms went about his neck. "Silly! As though you could get rid of me. I love you with all my heart."

The next night she met him at the door, her face radiant. She wore her prettiest dress and beyond in the softly lighted dining room he saw a centerpiece of tea roses.

"Bought them all myself—with the money I start to earn—next week," she announced gayly. "I went to see Mr. Slader and he said that my fourth successor—fourth, Gene!—was not satisfactory and I could have my position back, but he wanted to know what you thought about it. I told him frankly and I don't know yet whether he agrees with your viewpoint or mine. H mentioned our lovely home, your success and all that, but he seemed glad I am coming back."

Gene pulled a telegram from his pocket and passed it over to her.

"If I had thought you really meant what you said I would have wired Aunt Mary not to come, but you see by the wire she leaves tonight."

Lois read the message aloud:

"Leaving Wednesday night to make you and your wife a good, long visit. Love to you both. AUNT MARY."

Lois stamped the floor angrily. "There it is again—'and wife!' Oh, why did she have to come right now—just when I have a position? I cannot help it, Gene! I'm going to work, anyway."

"Of course, you are, Loey," soothingly. "But I am sorry it has happened that way, too. She is so old-fashioned; thinks a woman's place is in the home, and as this is her first visit to our home—postponed every year since we were married—it is unfortunate, but I will explain as best I can."

He leaned against the fireplace, his head resting against the mantel. There was a reminiscent smile on his fine face.

"Aunt Mary took me when mother died when I was five. She never had children of her own—she and Uncle Jim had lived alone in the old place, until I came. I remember how she always met him at the door at night, took his lunch box, kissed him, and told him to hurry because supper was ready. Then, the three of us would sit in front of the fireplace and Uncle Jim would tell me a wild west story—they were thrillers, too—and Aunt Mary would listen to my prayers while I warmed my back, and they both took me upstairs to bed, and would stand, their arms about each other, looking down at me until I closed my eyes."

There was silence for a moment before he continued softly:

"Their love, their devotion to each other, was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. She was just happy being his wife. She wanted nothing else, and I guess that is why I am so narrow on the subject. Loey—I was brought up that way. I have tried, ever since I married you, to be like what Uncle Jim was to Aunt Mary. To make you happy in my love—content to just be my wife. The night he died, she turned to me and said, 'Gene, he has just gone on before. When my call comes he will be waiting on the other side—for his wife.' And he is still waiting. I think I can make her understand, Loey, and we can make her visit happy, although the days may be lonely. And she will be proud of you. I know, and she will love you—"

Lois slipped her arms about his neck and drew his face to hers.

"Oh, Gene—I am so glad you told me—I want to be like Aunt Mary—I will call Mr. Slader right now, and tell him I have decided to keep my other, my most precious position in the world—your wife—and all that goes to make her position glorified."

Ancient Moroccan City Picturesque but Dirty

Rabat, Morocco, built almost 800 years ago by the labor of 40,000 Christian slaves, figured in the late news in connection with a recent attack of tribesmen from the Atlas mountains on a company of Senegalese infantry and Moroccan camel troops.

Rabat is located on the northwestern coast of French Morocco, adjacent to the old city of Sale, a former lair of corsairs. It is also near the ruins of Shella, a half-forgotten city that was once a thriving Roman colony.

There are two present-day Rabats, French Rabat and the native town, says the National Geographical society. French Rabat is like a bit of transplanted Europe. In its streets are women wearing Parisian clothes, business men in sack suits and smartly uniformed French officers. Everything is modern and efficient and over 13,000 Europeans live within its borders.

Native Rabat is another story. Squat houses line the narrow streets. From the mosque tower the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. Turbaned Arabs of the Beni Hassan tribe, Berbers from the hills and negroes file through the bazars. Heavily veiled women travel silently through the crooked streets. Groups of the sick and the deformed, clad in dirty white rags, lie in the streets of the bazars, begging alms from the passers-by.

There is slight demand for chairs or knives and forks in the souks. Chairs are used only by the stiff-legged Christian tourists and knives and forks are not necessary to eat couscous, the staple viand of the Moroccan meal.

Couscous is made with flour and meat and vegetables, and tastes not unlike the American dish of dumplings cooked with meat. It is served in a big pot and everyone sticks in his hand and brings forth his portion in three fingers. To use four fingers or two fingers is extremely bad manners. Moroccan etiquette demands three.

Two Mouths

Once in awhile, of course, even a very patient mother finds herself becoming impatient under the rapid-fire questioning of an inquisitive child. One such mother said to her little daughter:

"Now, please don't ask mother any more questions this morning."

A bit later the child returned.

"Mother, I wish I had two mouths."

"Why in the world do you want two mouths?"

"So that one could answer the questions the other one asks."

Imprisoned Queen

In the huge ant hills seen in most tropical countries, there is always a queen, which is imprisoned for life in a hard-formed pocket of clay. She is about two inches long, and looks like a big lump of fat, with the body of an ant attached at one end. She cannot move of herself, and is copiously fed by her subjects. The expression "Sit as an ant queen" is supposed to convey what the natives consider the acme of prosperous ease.

Historic Buildings in Finnish Town of Turku

Turku was Finland's first capital. Christianity was first taught there, and the first Christian converts were baptized in the River Aura. The oldest cathedral and the oldest castle in Finland are to be found in Turku, and nearly all the historic homes of the Finnish nobility are in or near the city.

With the exception of the cathedral and the castle, modern Turku has been built since the disastrous fire of 1827, when the old town was almost entirely destroyed in a blaze that burned for five days. Both the castle and the cathedral are grim structures with little exterior ornament. The cathedral has a long, narrow vaulted interior and most of the immense treasure which was once kept there has disappeared.

Part of the castle is now a museum and is furnished with pieces of old Finnish furniture. Visitors can still see the dungeon, six fathoms deep and black as pitch, where prisoners were kept. In the great central hall is a high gallery from which a cruel ruler once had unruly subjects hurled to the floor below. One cell in the castle is still known as the malefactor's resting place.—National Geographic Society Bulletin.

Fifty-Fifty

The well-known Irish comedian Talbot Farrell, tells the story of a typical "bull" perpetrated by one of his countrymen.

A small touring company was playing to rather meager audiences in a remote Irish town, and the manager, wishing to find out how the attendance at his show compared with the attendances at others, asked one of the local inhabitants how the theater was usually patronized.

"Oh, not so bad, not so bad," was the reply. "Sometimes it's half full, and sometimes it's half empty."—Pearson's Weekly.



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