

Village Life In China

By REV. V. MORRISON

Delightful Account of Life in the Interior of China by an Island Catholic Missionary who Describes the Ways and Methods of the Far Eastern Farmer and Fisherman.

As I had an opportunity this summer of travelling into the interior of China, and seeing for myself how the peasants lived, how they worked, what they talked about, how recreation hours were passed, I decided that the impressions I gathered, and the observations I made should be committed to writing, and sent to the readers of the Guardian.

The first thing that strikes one on entering a village is the apparent neglect everywhere. The boys and girls, the men and women are dirty and unwashed, the houses are filthy, the domestic animals, the fowls, the pigs have the same freedom of the house as the children. I asked some of them why they do not clean up the streets, and wash and scrub out their houses I received for reply:

"What is the use, they will get dirty again?"

Squalor and dirt are the companions of John Chinaman, and the more filthy the surroundings the more contented and satisfied he is. What to us is dirt and filth is to him quite the natural thing.

The daily life of the peasant and his family out in the fields is a hard one in our estimation, and we are inclined to sympathize with him. But he is born to it and is content with it, far more content, indeed, than is many a farmer's son on P. E. Island, who sighs for the comforts and attractions of the "Bright Lights" in the American Commonwealth.

He lives in the mud and straw cabin that his fathers lived in, and that his sons will live in after him; he is doing the same work and meeting with the same results, and contending with the same difficulties. He has enough to live on, he is small or great. He must be content with what his industry produces.

Droughts and floods are as inevitable to him as fair seasons, and he submits to them as patiently as he rejoices in the other.

Drab Monotony

In the villages of China all the houses are the same. There is no variety. Most of them are built of mud bricks and covered with a cover which washes. The roof is poor have cabins of reeds and dried grass. But there is little difference in the family life of either. Sometimes a window or two admits the light, though this is accomplished as well by pulling a few bricks out of the wall. When it rains or the weather becomes cold, these can be replaced, or the openings can be covered. The door is a two leaved affair, each leaf bearing the figure of a hideous looking guardian spirit, brandishing a sword to protect the home against evil influences.

Ancestral Reverence

It is the duty of the married sons to care for the aged parents, and no matter how old they may be, they remain as subject to the old people as when they were children. This duty of caring for parents is a sacred charge which binds all through life, and does not end even with the grave. They provide for them during life and when they die their Memorial Tablets must be hung in the most honorable place in the house, and every kind of honor must be paid them. The reason for this filial piety is their belief that the parents are the sole cause in giving them their being. This is the ancestor worship that creates such an obstacle to the conversion of the country.

When the eldest son marries he remains in the home; this is his duty as eldest of the family, in order that he may eventually take over the reins of government when the parents become too old. The younger sons, generally, and often do remain in the family after their marriage. In this way the household extends rapidly. But no matter how many families, there is only one master and all the earnings of the other are handed over to him, and he is the eldest son automatically becomes master of the house, and the younger brothers obey him with the same respect that they showed their aged father.

A comfortable family might own three or four acres of land, and every inch of this is carefully cultivated. Every one in the house helps in preparing the ground for the crops, and also to do their share of the harvesting. The burden of providing sufficient food for the entire household devolves on the father or eldest son. If he who provides the food and clothing for the son's families as well as for his own. He buys the cotton and distributes it to the daughters-in-law and they weave the cloth and make the clothes.

Field Work

At the first streak of dawn the family is up and goes out into the fields. All they take is a cup of tea, and this must do until ten o'clock when they have the first meal of the day. They always carry a teapot with them to the fields, for tea is a staple drink of China. The Chinese use water for washing and cleansing purposes, but never for slacking their thirst. They always drink tea. In the fields the family distributes themselves at equal distances in a straight line across the field with hoe and rake and work backwards slowly towards the edge of the field. In harvest time the younger members of the family follow the men folk binding the

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Silver Foxes On Exhibition In Great Britain

(London Daily Mail, Nov. 10.) Though fashion change, yet of those furs which rank as "precious," the silver fox is one, its lovely pelt being very becoming and luxurious. Unless they become very plentiful indeed, the price of these beautiful skins will never be low, one of the reasons being that they cannot be imitated. It is true that they are no longer worth what they were when the market was scantily supplied by trappers, but the "farms" that have sprung up so freely of recent years are not likely to cause a glut for a long while.

Eighty Exhibits from Great Britain. It may be a surprise to some people to hear that a number of "farms" are firmly established in England and Scotland, but such is the case, and for the first time on record some eighty silver foxes will form an annexe to the great international poultry and pigeon show at the Crystal Palace on November 16 and two following days. Very great interest will be aroused by their appearance, stimulated by the knowledge that big fortunes have been made in Canada and the United States.

Highly Profitable, Highly Speculative. An English breeder who is also a further remarked the other day that the industry is highly profitable but also highly speculative. Speculative any business must be that is dependent upon the health and profitability of shy animals, but skilled management can do much to overcome these handicaps. We can take it as proved that fine skins can be produced in our climate. At one of the sales last year, at which some 3,000 skins were offered, the top price was made by that a fox bred by Mr. Sidney Rice in Hertfordshire.

Accommodation and Equipment.

An acre of land will afford accommodation for several pairs, the minimum dimensions of each run being about 25ft. by 6ft.. The runs have to be wired in all round as well as on the top. The kennels, which are small, should be approached by a tunnel in order to give complete seclusion. Two conditions are essential—a dry soil and absolute quiet. For most of the year privacy and freedom from disturbance do not matter so much, but unless they are available in the breeding season in the early spring the parents may eat the young, which average four in number. Women are said to make the best attendants.

The Diet Necessary.

Coarse meat is the principal food, rabbits, fish, biscuits, brown bread, eggs and milk being introduced for variety. Thus it will be seen that the capital outlay on equipment and the running expenses are not exacting. Stock, however, is another matter, a good pair of foxes being worth £200. It is no longer necessary to go abroad for them. An owner, assisted by a man and boy, can look after about forty pairs. Those who understand the breeding of dogs or other livestock will appreciate the act that scientific breeding should be capable of improving the quality of the skins and increasing the prolificacy of a strain.

Killing is done at the end of November or beginning of December, when the markings are at the zenith of their beauty. In a few weeks the pure white of the hair takes on a yellowish tinge and so depreciates the value considerably. The black skin, it should be understood, are merely a melanistic variation of the same breed. The grades recognized in the trade are black, pale silver, and broad, or three-quarter silver, and classes will be provided for each kind at the show.

Recreation. After dark, if the farmer is wealthy enough to possess a kerosene lamp, the family may sit around the table for a friendly chat. But the most popular way to spend the hour of recreation before bed time is to gather at the door where it is easy to carry on a conversation with the whole street. Here the children play and the older people sit and talk. And what do they talk about? When you see two Chinamen talking you can always be sure that the topic of the conversation is money. The expenses of life form such a vital question in the village, that the price of this and the cost of that naturally become the most important subject of talk in the farmer's home and on the village street. Then night comes on and the whole family retires to their plank, hard wood bed and are soon fast asleep. Then the village is left to the care of the spirits and the night watchman, who goes about with his paper lantern and sounding his gong to keep away evil spirits and to frighten away robbers who may be in waiting to rob and steal from the villagers.

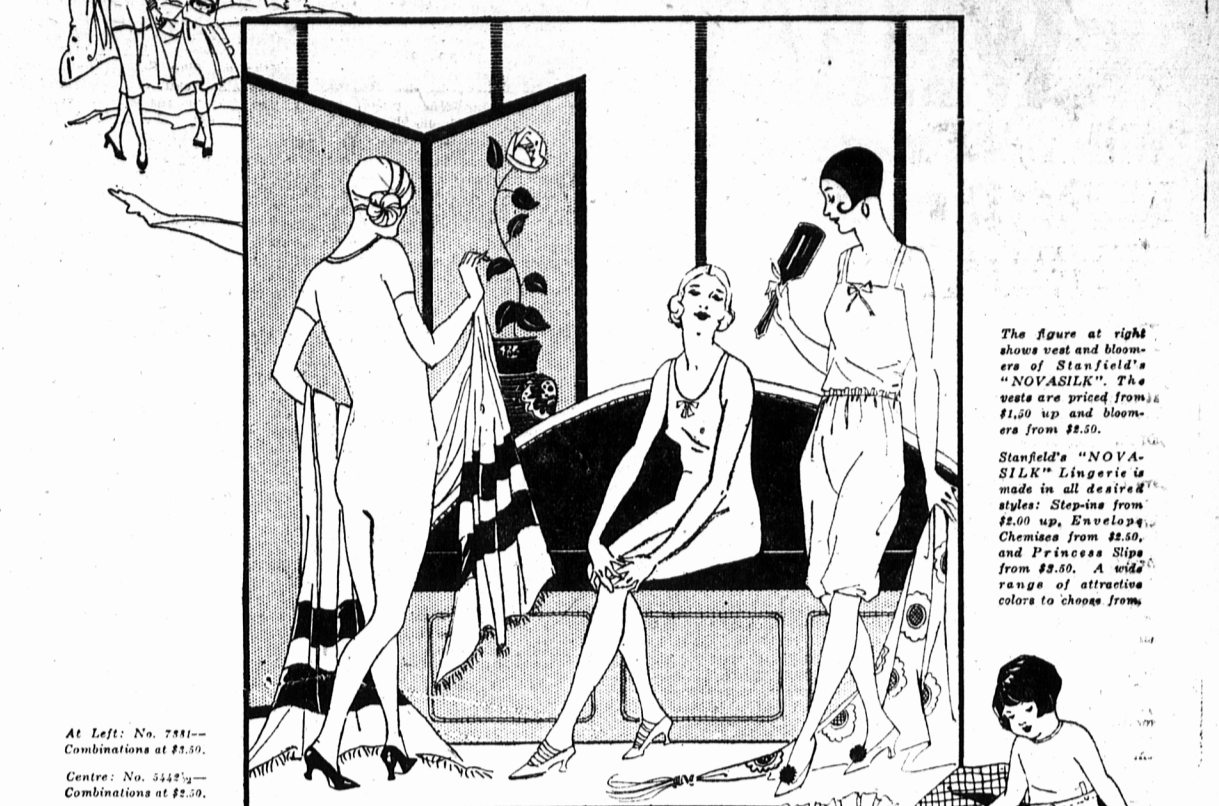
The Family Dinner

The family dinner consists of steamed rice, a dish which the Chinese never tire of. It is served without condiments of any kind. Besides the rice there will be a large bowl of steamed vegetables mixed with oil, and another bowl of steamed fish, sometimes chopped up pork and native macaroni (called Mei) are served. On feast days Lotus roots and chicken form a dainty extra. Embalmed eggs are a great delicacy. I have eaten these myself and found them very palatable, though they were five years old. The Chinese have the secret of putting up these eggs which is unknown to our western civilization. There are other very expensive dishes which are beyond the means of the villagers, such as Shark's fins and Birdnest soup.

The Hot Towel

The bowls are placed on the center of the table, and each one helps himself. He has his own rice bowl and uses it for all his food differently. Everything except soup is eaten with the Chop sticks, and these they manipulate with much dexterity. There is no table cloth or other wishes such as we use on the table. In eating rice the bowl is held close to the lips,

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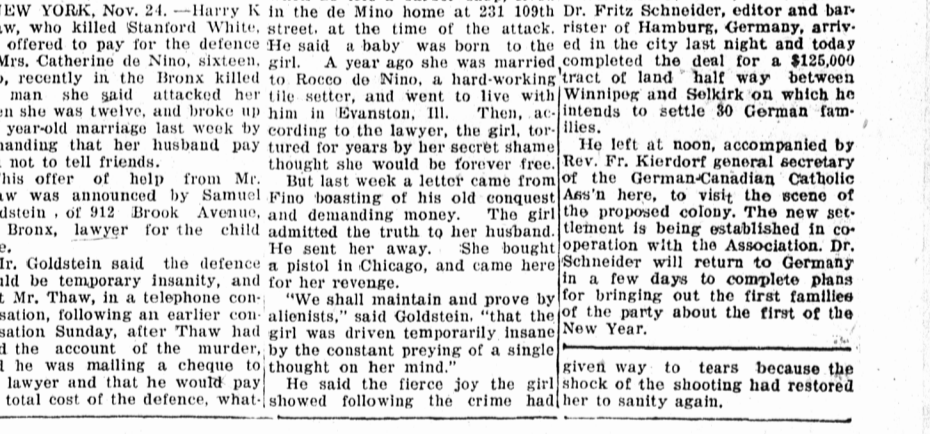
NEW YORK, Nov. 24.—Harry K. Thaw, who killed Stanford White, has offered to pay for the defence of Mrs. Catherine de Mino, sixteen, who, recently in the Bronx killed the man she said attacked her when she was twelve, and broke up her year-old marriage last week by demanding that her husband pay him not to tell friends.

30 GERMAN FAMILIES TO SETTLE IN CANADA

WINNIPEG, Man., Nov. 24.—Dr. Fritz Schneider, editor and bar-rister of Hamburg, Germany, arrived in the city last night and today completed the deal for a \$125,000 tract of land half way between Winnipeg and Selkirk on which he intends to settle 30 German families.

He left at noon, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Klorford general secretary of the German-Canadian Catholic Aes'n here, to visit the scene of the proposed colony. The new settlement is being established in cooperation with the Association. Dr. Schneider will return to Germany in a few days to complete plans for bringing out the first families of the party about the first of the New Year.

Lord and Lady Willingdom as they appeared on the golf links while on a visit to Ontario recently.



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