THE BISMARCK OF JAPAN

BY ONE WHO WAS THE GUEST OF THE MARQUIS ITO.

A Few Delightful Hours Spent at His Home Near Tokio.

Since Bismarck's death I have always considered the Marquis Ito the most remarkable man in the world, and a gentleman who has recently returned from a visit to Japan; and I think anyone who is familiar with his wonderful history will agree with me.

At any rate, there can be no question that at the present moment he is the most interesting personality living, and, as I had exceptional opportunities of studying him at close quarters a few months ago, I dare say your readers may like to know the result, says a writer in London Tit-Bits.

When one thinks of all the marquis has done in his lifetime one is apt to picture him as an old man whose work is done; but I assure you nothing could be farther from fact. In spite of his sixty-two years and the grey in his hair and beard he is still essentially a young man, alert, active, full of energy, and to all appearance equal to making a few more nations. He is also, as a great man should be, entirely without conceit and affectation, and I cannot resist a smile when I think how this man, within a few years has placed his country among the most progressive and powerful nations of the earth, listened with the deference of a student to my views on government when I spent a few delightful hours with him at his villa at Oiso, a few miles from Tokio.

There you see the great statesman at his very best, in his lovely home overlooking a glorious stretch of country bounded by the blue of the sea and that most beautiful of mountains, Fujiyama.

THE MARQUIS'S VILLA

is really two distinct houses, one thoroughly European, and the other composed from the former by lovely screens, and as perfectly Japanese—in places delightful. The marquis, when I had met two or three friends in Tokio, greeted me in his European villa with the warmth and hospitality you will find in each out of Japan. He dressed in European fashion, a black-coat worthy of any tailor, and over the inevitable dress suit and through an atmosphere of smoke—for you rarely see a Japanese without a cigar in his mouth—I was soon made to feel as much at home as if I had been for years.

Apart from the glorious view of sea and mountain and the beautiful windows, I found myself in a country of contrasts. On a corner of a dozen very familiar papers, magazines, and furniture and decorations English and the walls were covered with portraits principally the children of the marquis himself, and every inch a friend and playmate of his children.

The spell of the marquis's house passed with incredible rapidity while we discussed—I think I did most of the talking—almost every subject, and the brands of cigars to which I had just been introduced, the Japanese navy, and the time we were called away to dinner. The marquis led me

THROUGH BEAUTIFUL GARDENS,

I was interested to see were "half and half." That portion was entirely Japanese in the other and lower part was laid out with the gayest flowers of Europe. The flowers, he told me, were his "children," whom she tended with loving care and pride; for himself, he declared he was a farmer at heart and was content to admire the wheat, while the French visitor, a European as our host, was a Japanese—just such a man, I would get at a good dinner, and perfectly cooked. It was during this dinner the marquis told me some incidents of his life, commencing with the time when he was sent in exile over the seas to study. "Since those days I was little more than a boy," he said in his fluent English, "I loved England and I connected with your country there that I first dreamt dreams which, for my country, I am thankful have come true."

The dreams of a Japanese boy in London, have almost made his country the world, and the Marquis Ito, if he were comparably modest, might claim, it is I," for there is no step in its miraculous rise in the last thirty years that not inspired and directed by him in spite of such an opposition as, after, this man of a generation as unspoilt as a child, he said, as he shook his head, and twice after on the way to Oiso, and I felt as I came away I left another piece of my heart behind me.

MEASURING A WINK.

How fast can a man wink? One scientist interested in this fascinating question has made experiments in connection with it, and successfully measured the time occupied by the several parts of the movement. He says: "The complete duration of the descent of the lid is seventy-five to ninety-one thousandths of a second. The interval while the eye is shut was in one case fifteen hundredths of a second. The rising of the lid occupied seventeen hundredths of a second. A specially-arranged photographic apparatus was used for the experiment."

DOOM OF THE DRUNKARD

Have Your Scarlet Sins Cleansed Whiter Than the Driven Snow.

(Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Four by Wm. Baily, of Toronto, at the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.)

A despatch from Los Angeles, Cal., says:—Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage preached from the following text:—Psalm li. 7, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Absurd, simile," you say; "that statement cannot be scientifically true. There is nothing whiter than snow. No more than there is anything redder than death, or blacker than black, or redder than arterial blood or emptier than a vacuum."

Snow, from a chemist's standpoint, has a superlative whiteness. The purest of air vapors is that found far up in the heavens. Along comes a sudden cold wave and it freezes that vapor into snowflakes, just as that cold wave can freeze falling raindrops into hailstones which patter upon the pavement. Then as that snowflake slowly drops through the air it comes to us as white as it is possible for anything to be. And yet there is a sense in which the psalmist is right in saying that God can wash away our sins until we become "whiter, than snow," the pure snow, the spotless, wind driven snow.

THE DRUNKARD'S SINS.

We do not bind the imagination of the poet with the rigid bonds of scientific accuracy. He is accorded a license to see and hear with his spiritual eyes and ears scenes and sounds not scientifically true. Though these words of my text may not be literally true, in the figurative language of the psalmist they are poetically so. They may mean in the common language this: Though your past lives show stains that seem to you indelible as scarlet, though you have committed sins which have not only corrupted your own soul, but have laid the souls of others, like the human sacrifice of the Aztec sun worshipers on the fiery altars, yet even for you there are pardon and cleansing, if you will accept them. Like the prodigal in his rags and tatters, there is a home for you in the Father's house. Though, like Paul, you have to acknowledge yourself the chief of sinners, like him you may find grace and have the honor of toiling in Christian service. Christ is ready to cleanse the drunkard's sins. These are neither few nor small, for the drunkard's sins can drag a man down so low that he will lose all sense of decency and feel. They can change a man into a condition more imbruted than that of a wild beast. The drunkard after awhile seems to become as unremovable in his passions as the patient whose voracious appetite after a long illness is a sign of fever. The drunkard's sin will make a man lie and steal and destroy his home and his manhood. The drunkard's sins will harden a man's heart as well as his brain. The drunkard's sins may be the legion of demons which drive the reason of the poor maniac who roamed and alone, haunted the tombs of the Gadarenes, and, like them, may be exorcised by the same divine power. They are the direct and indirect cause of countless other sins.

REDDEST OF ALL SINS.

The drunkard's sins, without doubt, must be classed among the reddest of all scarlet sins. Now comes the question, Will God cleanse the drunkard's sins? When we say the loathsome, heartless, good for nothing drunkard do we mean, is there no hope for the drunkard? Some of us have such a belief that we do mean this; we never meant, nor said, it. "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," is a direct reply to the charge that Christ will forgive the drunkard's sins, though by drunkenness you have lost your home under the sheltering roof, though you have wrecked your business and had your eyes struck with the kaleidoscope of delirium tremens, yet there is pardon and peace for you! I have the same message of salvation and rescue for you that there for Francis Murphy, or Gough, or Jerry Barbour, or as there is in the stores and hundreds of reformed drunkards who every night are testifying to the glorious saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Though your drunkard's sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

CHRIST READY TO FORGIVE.

Christ is ready to cleanse also the murderer's sins. By that I mean Christ is ready to forgive those who have dishonorably broken up the sanctities of the home. He forgave the sins of Rahab, who concealed the spies; he forgave the sins of the woman who stole the poor man's lamb; he forgave the sins of the woman who talked with him at the Samaritan well; he forgave the sins of the woman denounced by the scribes, to whom he turned and said: "Woman, where are thine accusers? Doth no man condemn thee? Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more." Christ is ready to forgive the social outcast's sins as he was ready to forgive the sins of the dying thief and murderer.

Again, though the Bible declares there is but one unpardonable sin, and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet, strange to say, most people are not willing to forgive the sins of libertinism, especially if the social outcast belongs to the female sex. Alas, alas! Even the best of men, the leaders in our churches and pulpits, are often ready to look upon the breakers of the seventh commandment as moral degenerates who have no chance for ultimate rescue either in this world or in the next. Many people are apt to look upon immoral outcasts in the same way that the stern old Scottish elder looked upon the actions of his wayward daughter in the beautiful story in Ian Maclaren's "Bonnie Brier Bush." He professed to believe in the unlimited power of God's forgiveness, yet when his only daughter, his motherless girl, his one child, who was all to him, had been led into sin he turned to the clerk of the village kirk and said: "Aye, blot her name off the books! She is my child, but blot her name off the books!"

But, oh, my brother and sister, though man is hard upon fallen man, and woman especially hard upon fallen woman, yet God to-day offers pardon and peace for every penitent Magdalene. Though your sins against morality may be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than the driven snow.

PARDON FOR ALL.

Christ is ready to forgive the murderer's sins. By that do I mean that he is ready to forgive the highwayman, who with lifted gun, shoots down the innocent pedestrian? By that do I mean that Christ is ready to forgive the fiend who poisons the helpless child or, who in the dark night drives the knife into the heart of his sleeping anniversary? Yes, Jesus is ready to forgive the convicted murderer though he may be standing upon the scaffold under the hangman's noose, about to expiate his awful crime. "Pardon for all" is the meaning of my text—pardon and peace and eternal life for all, no matter how vile, if in sincere repentance they will come to him and plead for his mercy through his atoning sacrifice.

NO SINNER NEED DESPAIR.

But among the murderers who are to be pardoned I would also class those who have slain their victims by false signs, as well as by bullet or by gun. He is ready to forgive those who have slain by the lip as well as by the hand. In olden times the pirates along the coast of England used to change the positions of the lights. Then the sea captains, watching the beckonings of the false lights, would drive their boats upon the rocks and be wrecked. The pirates would rifle the drowned bodies as they would be floated upon the shore, and gather together the wrecked cargoes. They were murderers—murderers whose weapons were false lights. So God will forgive even those murderers who have destroyed their fellow men by false examples as well as he will forgive those who have murdered them with the dagger or the gun.

"What!" some murderer says. "Pardon for my scarlet sins? Oh, no! It cannot be true. Why, you do not know what you are saying. My sins are worse than scarlet. They are black with the hopelessness of despair. There can be no pardon for me. Let me tell you my awful story: When I went to college, I was a very wild boy. I had there a roommate who was the son of a minister. He was a ruddy faced lad and as pure as a little child. I taught him how to drink and how to gamble. I urged him out of his belief in the Bible. I led him on, step by step, into the paths of sin. One night—I can remember the time as though yesterday—he sat upon the corner of his bed, and, with a strange light in his eyes, he turned and looked at me and said: 'Jim, do you really believe that my mother's Bible is only a pack of superstitions? Do you believe there is no hell?' 'Yes, Harry,' I answered. Then I went on to convince him of it. Then he laughed a horrible laugh. Then he turned and said: 'Well, old superstition, good-bye, good-bye! May you live long enough to soften the dying pillow of my mother and father, but as for me, good-bye, good-bye! Come, Jim, let's go and take a drink.'"

READY TO FORGIVE.

"From that moment, sir, that young fellow let loose all his evil desires. He seemed to leap into a very whirlpool of sin. Within a few months he was expelled from college. Within two years he committed suicide, and this is the letter he wrote on the night of his self murder: 'Dear Mother—This is the last letter you will ever receive from me. I have broken your heart, but try to forget and forgive. If there is no hell, as Jim says, this world is a hell enough for me. From your disgraced and dying boy.' 'Did you do all that?' 'Yes,' he answered. 'Well my friend, I know not how God will forgive, but he can and he will. The blood of Jesus Christ will even cleanse you, if you will only ask for Christ's forgiveness. 'Whosoever.' Ah that is the word. 'Whosoever, whosoever!' That means you. Yes, it means you. 'Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'"

Christ is ready to forgive also the merciless thief's sins, even as he forgave the thief upon the cross. He is ready to forgive the thief's sins, whether you have by evil jealousy stolen away a man's good reputation or have rifled a widow's pocketbook; whether you have stolen a good name or a financial income.

Man, you know that was a desperately mean act for you to circulate that evil report about that physician's life. You know that there never was a squarer, truer man than he, yet you did it in order to ruin his practice—aye, and you have succeeded! From a worldly standpoint you can never make atonement for that damage. But God will forgive you, even you, if you will come and ask for his pardon. Woman, that was an awful statement you made about the character of that sister. "You say that you are sorry, that you did not look into the facts before the evil was done, and she died of a broken heart. It is now too late to bring her back to life. But God will forgive you. Yes, whether we are thieves who have robbed men and women of their good names, God will forgive us if we only repent. "Though your sins be as scarlet." That means you; that means you. Will you, O man, O woman, accept the omnipotent and endless and eternal forgiveness of God? Will you have your sin-stained garments washed in the blood of the Lamb?

PEEP INTO LAW COURTS

WHERE BRITISH JUSTICE SITS IN ITS MAJESTY.

Some Account of the Surroundings of London's Law Courts.

The high courts of justice; from the dingy courts of summary jurisdiction in a mean street to the imposing buildings in the Strand constitutes as big a difference as between the class of case taken in each. To properly appreciate the amount of work and business transacted in this great warren of corridors and rooms would necessitate the spending of a week at least in its precincts. Enter by the magnificent hall, walk its length, and if tempted select one of the dark openings which apparently lead to crypt-like chambers. When the eyes have sufficiently adapted themselves to the gloom, one is offered a choice of ways; in fact, staircases and passages radiate in all directions. Prominent notices on otherwise blank stone walls help the stranger but little, and risking a mistake, you make headway for the most imposing set of steps. For all the world it is like being in a castle. Through loop-hole windows private staircases are to be seen winding spirally into an outer darkness; the arched and groined roofs strike you as distinctive features, the peculiar windows starve an already impoverished light. Finally the corridor is gained, and you are immediately struck by the remarkable business of the place. The cloister-like passage resounds with the steps of scores of busy barristers, counsel and witnesses. Every few paces reveals a consulting room, or an alcove where evidence is gone over point by point before being submitted to the jury; here, too, cases are "settled out of court."

OVERPOWERING OPPRESSION.

At times the corridor is more animated than the Strand outside; people seem to start from nowhere, and disappear likewise. Without pause the glass doors swing noiselessly to and fro, impassive janitors guard their motion, and at the same time exercise some discretion as to admitting persons into court. Having successfully passed the officer and drawing back the heavily-curtained door, you are in one of the eighteen courts set aside for the yearly increasing litigation of the country. At least, it is lighter in here; the sunlight streams in through the diamond-paned windows, and so softly suffused through the frosted-glass roof. Even with this the overpowering oppression caused by the heavy masonry is not to be overcome; neither does the oak paneling—heavy and enduring—help as a relief. Everything is substantial, as though the courts had been designed to last for all time—and a day afterwards.

LIFE'S VARIED PHASES.

Each court reveals a distinct phase of life; needless to say, the purely commercial chancery and admiralty cases find less attentive and crowded audiences than are to be found in the King's bench division and the divorce court. If on any morning a long queue is seen extending along the Strand pavement, it is a sufficient sign that a cause celebre is in progress, and that the limited capacity of a particular court will be overtaxed. The public gallery will be crowded by fashionable people, or an obliging tipstaff will secure a seat at the back of the court; the middle benches monopolized by rising barristers, anxious to learn some point of procedure and to closely study from the K. C.'s in the front benches for their method of conducting examinations; on the first seat of all, hedged in by a formidable array of brief-boxes, are the solicitors and their clerks. The jury are almost on a level with the judge, and the press generally manages to monopolize all the seats allotted to them, and the stairs as well. It is a most interesting sight, especially when the attention of the whole court is concentrated on some piece of evidence given by the important witness who stands in the witness-box, which in all the courts is prominently situated and is on a level with the judge.

THE LORD CHIEF.

The lord chief justice's court is the best of the number. It is imposing, and has the additional recommendation of being more roomy and better ventilated than the rest. At the back of the broad platform are the royal arms, equisitely carved and standing out in relief against the green plush hangings. Well forward in the court sits the lord chief justice, the broad band of vivid vermilion of his robes being the only patch of glaring color in the court, unless it be that of some smart costume of some fashionable lady present. The mere spectator might spend a more unprofitable time than in exploring the vastness of this legal fortress off the Strand.

Stories are told concerning a certain Irish town where "watchmen" are still employed to parade the streets by night and "call the hours," their usual formula being something like this: "Two o'clock; all's well, all's well!" One night, as a visitor happened to be lying awake, he heard the following somewhat paradoxical cry:—"Two o'clock; all's well! Smith's mill's on fire; one man killed. All's well."

FOR THE HOME

Recipes for the Kitchen. Hygiene and Other Notes for the Housekeeper.

GOOD THINGS TO EAT.

Fancy Cakes for Refreshments.—In serving sherbet and ice cream for evening refreshments, housekeepers usually find that small fancy cakes are much more enjoyable than layer and loaf cakes. When homemade cakes are served they are received more eagerly by the average guests than baker's cake, and a variety may be made very easily as well as inexpensively, with one batch of dough. The following is a good recipe to use in this way: One cup sugar, 1½ cups butter, 1 egg, 4 tablespoons milk, 2 teaspoons baking powder. Mix not too stiff, but so that it can easily be rolled out. Divide this dough into four parts. Into one portion mix ½ cup grated cocoanut, roll out, sprinkle cocoanut over the top, cut with a small, round cutter and bake in a brisk oven until a creamy brown. Into a second portion mix ½ cup chopped peanuts, roll out and bake. Roll out the third part as it is, and place a preserved cherry or raisin in the center of each. Into the fourth part mix ½ of a cake of chocolate, melted. Roll out, sprinkle grated cocoanut over the dough, cut and bake until the cocoanut is a very light brown.

Squash Cakes.—Mash fine some cooked squash and for each 1 pt. allow 2 beaten eggs, 1 cup bread crumbs dried in the oven, 1 minced onion, 1 heaping teaspoon powdered sage, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 tablespoons sweet cream, a little grated nutmeg and a dash of pepper. First add the cream and eggs to the squash; next add the onion and other seasonings and lastly, the bread crumbs. Mix well and if the mixture is not stiff enough to form into cakes, add more bread or fine cracker crumbs. Fry brown in hot butter.

Nut Hash with Rice Toast.—Boil 1 cup rice until soft; turn into a square mold or pan and stand on ice over night or until quite firm. Then cut into half-inch slices, rub each slice over with melted butter and toast a delicate brown on a broiler, transferring each slice as toasted to a hot platter and arranging on each a little mound of chopped nuts that have been sauted in butter, then moistened with boiling water. Garnish with parsley and sliced lemon. Serve with tomato sauce.

Nut Croquettes.—Mix thoroughly 1½ cups chopped almond and peanut meats, 1 cup Bread crumbs, 1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper; add 2 tablespoons salad dressing, then 1¾ cups hot stock or gravy; stir well and add 1 beaten egg. When cold, form into balls, or if preferred, cylinder shapes; arrange in a buttered pan, dot with bits of butter and bake in a quick oven till nicely browned. Transfer to serving platter and garnish with curled lettuce, cress or parsley.

Baked Liver is most easily prepared. Lard the pieces of liver with bacon. Place slices of carrot, two slices of onion, a couple of bay leaves and two or three cloves in the baking pan, on which place the liver. Season with salt and pepper and add a cup of water. Put in the oven and bake slowly, the time depending on the size and tenderness of the liver). When done serve the vegetables with the liver and make a good gravy.

VEGETARIAN DIET.

A simple vegetarian diet properly prepared will keep the body in better health than more elaborate meat diets. Facts show that man or woman can live healthily and be strong on a diet into which flesh never enters. Again, the non-flesh eater suffers from less illness than the mixed feeder.

Vegetables are a most valuable food and with the addition of grains will sustain life and insure health, without the use of animal meat. Many vegetables such as beans, peas, lentils, etc., being flesh formers, can easily take the place of meat and become necessary to the diet of the non-flesh eater. Some of the grains must be taken in small quantities daily, or in average quantities every other day, along with fruits and vegetables daily.

Nearly all vegetables are blood purifiers; they dissolve other food and greatly assist digestion. Some find such vegetables as cabbage, leeks, etc., not easily digested. When this is so, they should be boiled half the usual time, the water then being drained off and replaced with fresh boiling water to complete the process of cooking. Prepared thus, these vegetables will agree with the most delicate digestion. The same process may be advantageously followed with potatoes that are old and out of season, and will remove the bitter taste and injurious juice which their age engenders.

Then as to fruit, most people are found of such, and many would eat freely of it, but they are afraid of ill results. If they would make a meal of it along with whole wheat bread, then no ill results would follow, and by eating it this way, the full flavor of the fruit will be brought out. Let there be no butter on the bread, as the salt in the butter spoils the fruit. In a fruit diet, fluids may be dispensed with, as the fruit consists of so large a percentage of water that thirst is not experienced. Fruit acids are highly beneficial to the system, being useful agents in getting rid of some diseases, as they render lime and soda salts soluble, which enables the system to show them off. The skins of such fruit as apples, plums, cherries and grapes should always be eaten, as they contain the vegetable salts. In France and Germany there is what is known as the "grape cure," which has been found so successful in the treatment of diseases due to overfeeding. A pound or two of grapes with bread is commenced with, and the quantity increased until half a dozen pounds or more can be taken daily.

Never let a day pass without taking fruit with one meal. Those who would practice vegetarianism must be warned against using it as a fad, for in that case it becomes injurious and apt to lead one to extremes, but as a wise way of dieting, there is none better or more healthy, as well as cheap.

HOUSECLEANING HINTS.

April and May, according as one is forehanded or a little behindhand, are the principal months for simple but effectual method of cleaning. Now there are a number of simple but effectual methods of cleaning furniture, paint, wood-work, etc. which, if only more widely known and practised would prove a boon and a blessing to the careful housewife, not only by saving the expense incurred by resorting to the professional cleaner, but by preventing the almost whole sale destruction wrought by injudicious cleaning.

Chinese and Japanese matting may be much improved by sponging with strong salt and water, but the wet must not be allowed to sink through.

A very good polish for hardwood floors is made by scraping 1 oz. of beeswax into about half a teacupful of linseed oil, and gradually dissolving it in turpentine till of the thickness of cream. This is applied with a woolen cloth, and afterwards rubbed up with a soft duster. This mixture is equally good for linoleum, and for stained floors. Should a floor require retaining, one quart of cold-drawn linseed oil, well mixed with 1½ oz. of rose pink, and 4oz. of alkanet root will prove to be a very nice stain. It should be left standing by the fire or three or four days, and will then be ready for use. Rub it on the floor with a large whitewash brush, leave it to dry; repeat this process once more, and then when dry polish with the mixture just given for hardwood floors.

Paper-hangings demand most careful treatment, and it is seldom wise to attempt more than dusting them with a soft cloth. Rubbing with stiff dough is often suggested, but, unless this is more skilfully done, the result is a streaky appearance—much worse than a general uniform dirtiness. The dough, however, may be used to remove a grease spot provided that the paper is sufficiently substantial to allow of the necessary rubbing; with a thin, poor quality of paper it might produce a hole.

All paint should be cleaned with a little ammonia in a quantity of warm—not hot—water, and finished with a sponge and clean, cold water, never touching it with a cloth.

In the case of white paint, a little whitening may be added to the water. Gilt frames of every description require the greatest care, and after a thorough dusting with feather brush, should be merely sponged with a very little turpentine, not too wet, but only just moist enough to remove the dirt and the marks.

For alabaster, ornaments, etc., make a paste with quick lime and water leave it on for a few days, and then wash off with warm water and soap.

TENDER AND TRUE.

Squire Benson was often consulted in cases of family difficulty resulting from the storm and stress of time or temper, and he derived a good deal of amusement from the tales told in his little office.

"Is it true that you threw something at Mike that caused the swelling over his eye?" the squire asked a little wiry Irishwoman who appeared, sobbing at his door one day an hour after her husband had departed.

"Yis, I did," said the little woman catching her breath, "but I niver wint to hurt him, and he knows it well. We'd just come home from me cousin's wedding, an' I was feeling kind of soft to Mike, and I axed him if he loved me as much as he did the day we was married; and—and he was so slow answering me that I up wid the mop an' flung it at him. Squire Benson; for if we poor women don't have love our hearts just breaks inside of us!"

PAINLESS DENTISTRY.

When a Chinaman wants to have a tooth drawn, he feels no nervous apprehension of pain, for the excellent reason that he knows his dentist will not inflict any. The latter simply rubs a secret powder over the aching tooth. After about five minutes the patient sneezes and the tooth falls out. Many attempts have been made by Europeans to get some of this mysterious powder, but no one has yet succeeded.

COST OF TELEGRAPHS.

To keep the 30,000 odd miles of telegraph line in order in Great Britain and provide for the proper dispatch and delivery of messages that pass over them every month, entails an expenditure of about £2,250,000 a year, and of this total more than £1,500,000 goes in paying the salaries and wages of the immense staff of engineers, skilled operators and messengers, and of those who direct their operations and keep the accounts straight.

SHARE CARRIAGES.

A curious custom exists in Genoa. Many of the well-to-do people, as well as those in moderate circumstances, do not own either horses or carriages; they own only an interest in them. Four or five or half a dozen great families club together and buy a carriage and horses, then they arrange among themselves the days the different families will use it.

Miss Budd—"Do you approve of early marriages?" Mrs. Malaprop—"Not too early. I should say not before noon."

"He would have run through his fortune in a year if it hadn't been for his wife." "How did she prevent it?" "She spent it herself."

THE S. S. LESSON.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, MAY 1[illegible]

Text of the Lesson, Luke xv., 11-24. Golden Text, Hosea vi. 1.

The lesson to-day is only one part of the threefold parable of this chapter, the whole setting forth the great love of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for lost, helpless, erring humanity, and the sympathy of the angels with God in [illegible] over the salvation of the lost. The lost sheep suggests our inclination, because of sin, to go astray from God (Ps. lviii., 3; cxix. 176; Isa. liii. 6; I. Pet. ii., 25); the lost piece of money indicates our helplessness, our inability to restore ourselves, and our deadness to a sense of our condition (Rom. v., 6; Eph., [illegible] 5), while the sons of to-day's lesson illustrate the selfishness, ingratitude and rebellion of sinful man, and also the self righteousness and lack of sympathy with God of many who profess to be His.

It is very plain that neither of the sons in our lesson saw his father; they neither trusted nor enjoyed him. It was God's constant complaint of Israel that notwithstanding all He had done for them they knew Him not (Isa. i., 3; Jer. [illegible]; Hosea v., 1, 6; v., 4; Mic. [illegible] 15). Lost touching is our Lord's word to Philip on the night before the crucifixion, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" (John xiv., 9). It must be a great grief to Him when we talk or act as if we knew Him not. All fear, or anxious care, or fretfulness, anything but the restful peace of calm confidence, is an indication that we know Him not at all for night.

The youngest son illustrates those who prefer God's gifts to God himself—a present selfish enjoyment rather than the love of God and the comfort of His presence. He went out from the presence of his father to do as he pleased; Esau, who preferred the present enjoyment of a mess of pottage to his birthright, and its very great inheritance, and Israel preferring the fruits to the Canaan and the promised blessings of some phases of prodigal son. When we turn away from God, who is the fountain of living waters, and seek to satisfy our thirst with broken cisterns, we find no water, and soon we begin to hold our lips for lack of water. Shall surely come to want (Jer. ii., 13; John iv., 13, 14). For further comment on this line of misconduct, see Eccl. [illegible] 8; [illegible] 11.

There is a place for the son's experience seen in those believers who, after the blessings of justification and sanctification, leave Christ Himself, in which is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and while such have reasons they often begin to want of a new blessing, when Christ Himself would satisfy. The far country is the world which lieth in wickedness (Gal. 1, 4; 1 John v., 19) and which allures us away from God. All is vanity, as is the world about us on every side. This begins to attract, there is help of man, the world, when once there is hunger for God, but there must needs be a deep humiliation ere the soul will wholly and persistently turn to God. Then a sense of want, then seeking help from the world, then a hungry appetite— these are often the developments ere a man begins to see himself as he really is. Cor. v. 5, of one delivered for the destruction of the flesh, the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Luke xxiii, 14-30, we read how God will do everything that is possible to induce man to turn to Him, for we must be brought to the end of ourselves before we will think rightly of our Father's house and love and plenty.

Having realized by bitter experience something of his own folly and of the cold world into which he had wandered, his thoughts and then his feet turn homeward to the love and plenty of his father's house. But he does not yet know his father, thinks only of the possibility of obtaining a servant's place in his father's house. He did not dream of the welcome and the full restoration that awaited him; nor can the sinner understand the love of God and the free justification and the full acceptance which await him if he will only return (Rom. v., 8; ii., 24; Eph. i, 6,7) Our Lord in this parable tells us the heart of His and our Father in heaven and teaches us that God sees the first motion of the heart toward Him and meets the returning one more than half way.

See God clothing His sinful Adam and Eve with coats of skins which He had made (Gen. iii., 21); See the robe of righteousness and garments of salvation of Isa. lxi., 10; II Cor. v, 21; the ring and royalty and authority of Gen. xli. 42; the shoes and precious promise of Deut. xxxiii, 25, and consider what a welcome is here described as being ready for every returning penitent—not only forgiveness of sins, with righteousness and full restoration to position and inheritance and authority, which was lost in Adam, but also true fellowship and great joy, for servants of the kingdom. See Est. vi., 1-37, as a helpful light on this. The elder brother reminds us of those Christians who feel envy and irritation when God blesses unworthy ones. He had a distinct appreciation of his own merits, talked of strict performance of duty, but did not enjoy the privileges of a son. He neither knew nor enjoyed the father's love, yet see his father's wonderful word in verse 31, and lay it to heart.

Nothing takes the conceit out of a young man like a dose of matrimony.

A WONDERFUL RAILWAY

ONE CAN TRAVEL 5,450 MILES FOR $90.

From England to Japan by This Route in Less Than Three Weeks.

There can be no doubt that the credit of being the most wonderful railway in the world fairly belongs to the great trans-Siberian line, which carries passengers from Central Russia to Vladivostock and Port Arthur, on the Chinese coast of the Pacific. It is 5,450 miles from Moscow to Port Arthur, and the train accomplishes the journey in fourteen days, so that a person may now travel from England to Japan by this route in less than three weeks.

As everybody knows, this line is a very important feature of the situation in the war going on between Russia and Japan, and, indeed, without it Russia would find it next to impossible to conduct a war against her enemy. For the time being it is used for nothing but carrying troops and munitions of war, and the mail service which began only a few months ago has been temporarily stopped.

This line of 5,450 miles has cost the Russian Government over £100,000,000 to build. No fewer than 76,000 men were employed in constructing the chief section of 3,712 miles across Siberia. In making the bridges and in carrying [illegible] various other works as many as 101,839 tons of cement were used, and 2,000,000 sleepers and baulks of timber were employed in laying the rails and in erecting the houses and station buildings. To provide all this wood more than

100,000 ACRES OF FORESTS

had to be cut down. There were 800,000 cubic fathoms of sand required as ballast.

The total weight of the rails used in the whole length of the line has been 1,235,936,000 lbs. Such an enormous figure can convey very little meaning to the mind of the ordinary person. Reckoning the weight of the average inhabitant of a big town, men, women, and children, at 7st 2 lb.—a very liberal allowance—these railway metals weigh three times as much as the whole population of London. At one place the railway comes to a stop at a big lake (Lake Baikal), which is 3,000 ft. deep.

In the summer the passengers are ferried across and join a new train at the other side. In the winter, when the lake is frozen, they are taken across in sledges by horses, but just at present the line [illegible] along the ice so that the train dash straight across the [illegible] in the world that can travel with passengers over a frozen lake. It is to say, in the whole of the enormous length of this railway there is but one tunnel.

Scores of thousands of men of different nationalities were employed in building the line, and the Russian Government, being unable to provide sufficient labour, chain gangs were employed, one workman out of every five being a criminal. Some of the convicts about one in every [illegible] are still employed in different [illegible] and many people have come to the conclusion in consequence that

THE LINE IS NOT SAFE

for travelling upon; but only the convicts who have served their time and satisfied the authorities of their good behaviour for the future are so engaged.

A really good and [illegible] railway minus being required for the [illegible] Russian Government built the town of Dalny specially for it. [illegible] to be nothing where Dalny is now, and the town was built and equipped with public institutions, parks, and places of amusement before [illegible] was allowed to inhabit it.

When there is no war [illegible] start every week from Moscow for Port Arthur and Dalny, two of them being run by the Russian Government and two by a private company. The first-class fare for the whole journey in a sleeping compartment is $130, and $90 in second-class. Food is extra and for the fortnight's travelling costs about $35. There are smoking-rooms and libraries on the trains, and there are usually about seventy-five passengers in each train load. Most things are cheap on the train except baths, which cost about $1 a time. There are three beds to every first-class compartment and four to every second.

There is always a certain amount of danger of the trains being attacked by the Chinese, and therefore special precautions are taken as on no other railway. The whole line through Manchuria is guarded by many thousands of troops, and there are companies of armed men at every station. Besides this the train for the last portion of the journey is protected by bullet-proof armour-plates which reach as high as the carriage windows, and a small body of soldiers is carried.

Mrs. Gotham—"Now, they say Chicago is to have the most powerful telescope ever made. What do you suppose that is for?" Mr. Gotham—"I presume they want to find out if the top storeys of the houses are inhabited."

"Pretty cold up in Montana, wasn't it?" "Cold! That's no name for it. It used to fairly make the teeth of a gale chatter. The moonbeams used to freeze and make the earth look like a porcupine for hours after the moon had gone down." "How'd the thermometer run?" "Why, look here. You may not believe it, but half the mornings in January we'd find the thermometer had turned itself upside down during the night, so the mercury could get a chance to go lower."