

LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWS.

AN EARTHQUAKE.

Owing to a rather sharp earthquake which occurred about 2 a.m. on the 29th ultm the c'ock of the Observatory has been shaken and the time given at noon and 9 p.m. on the following day, cannot be relied upon as the exact time.

POWDER EXPLOSION IN JAPAN.

A powder magazine in the compound of the cavalry barracks of the Himeji division was blown up on December 17, one man being killed, while several school students were injured. The force of the explosion was such that many of the doors and windows of the houses in the city were blown in, and a pall of dense smoke hung over the town for a time. Field exercises had been engaged in by an infantry regiment, and a non-commissioned officer named Nakata went to return some unused cartridges to the magazine. It is presumed that he must have either touched some percussion-cap or dropped the ammunition he was carrying in his hand.

DIVING FOR FORGERIES.

The Hongkong "Daily Press" is informed that the police, prosecuting their inquiries into the importation of alleged forged Hongkong bank notes into the Colony, conducted diving operations on December 24 in the northern fairway in the vicinity of the spot where the Japanese Awa Maru anchored. Success attended their efforts, forged bank notes to the face value of something like \$200,000 being recovered from the bottom of the harbour. Some of these were found loose, but the majority were found in a Japanese travelling basket, which had apparently been thrown over-board. It is believed that notes to the face value of \$1,000,000 have been sent to Hongkong.

PHILIPPINE

INDEPENDENCE.

The Philippine Assembly recently passed unanimously a resolution supporting the Jones Bill for Philippine independence and asking for its immediate passage by Congress. President Taft was freely criticized for his recent message to Congress in which he spoke of the unfitness of the Filipino people for independence. Among several interesting statements made in the course of the debate was one to the effect that President Taft had permitted and encouraged the attendance at the St. Louis Exhibition of the members of the wild tribes, in order to give the false impression that all the people of the islands were of that kind, and that the people had got that impression and still retained it!

HUGHES COMEDY CO.

The Hughes Comedy Company which enjoyed a fair measure of success in Shanghai about nine months ago returned to the settlement yesterday, and opened again at the Victoria Cinematograph Hall. It is perhaps worthy of note that their peregrinations after leaving here extended over 2,000 miles. A number of changes have taken place in the personnel of the Company, but the same standard of excellence is maintained judging by last night's performance. "The Grafters" was the comedy piece produced and the audience greatly appreciated the many humorous situations with which it abounds. Some of these lent themselves to quaint dialogues of which the utmost was made. The principals did well, and received every support from the chorus which is unusually large for a touring company.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A SHANGHAI CANDIDATE.

The "Evening Standard" of December 11 states that Mr. W. Herbert Drummond, London, Revising Barrister of the Inner Temple, is the prospective Unionist candidate for the Forest of Dean, and was to have been formally adopted as such on the 19th. This piece of news is of special interest to Shanghai, for the Mr. Drummond referred to is a son of Mr. W. V. Drummond, and for some time, it may be mentioned, was in the office of Messrs. Ilbert & Co.

The Forest of Dean is a Liberal constituency, the present member being Mr. H. Webb, who was elected at the bye-election in February, 1911. His majority over the Conservative candidate on that occasion, Mr. D. H. Kyd, was 3,068.

SHANGHAI-NANKING RAILWAY.

The following figures of traffic returns (approximately) for the week ended December 21, are issued by the Shanghai-Nanking Railway:—

Year.	For the Week.		
	Passengers.	Goods and Sundries	Total for the week.
1912 ...	\$ 38,567	\$ 8,200	\$ 46,767
1911 ...	\$ 52,304	\$ 6,810	\$ 59,114
Increase .	—	1,390	—
Decrease.	13,737	—	12,347
Year.	For fifty-one weeks.		
	Passengers.	Goods and Sundries.	Total.
1912...2,187,766	\$ 404,856	\$ 2,592,622	
1911...1,874,853	\$ 306,121	\$ 2,180,974	
Increase.	312,913	98,735	411,648
Decrease	—	—	—

A VESSEL LOOTED.

From Our Own Correspondent.

T'aichowfu, Dec. 23.

In the early morning of Saturday, Dec. 21, the str. Haimen plying between Ningpo and Haimen ran upon a partially submerged rock

midway between Chusan and Shih-pu.

The weather was foggy. Fortunately the sea was calm and all the passengers landed safely. There were no Europeans on board.

The fisher folk looted the vessel without delay, until the arrival of a guard boat warned them off.

It is uncertain whether the mails have been saved, some assert that the comprador's cabin defied the pirates' attempts to force an entry.

The latest report is that the vessel is head down and likely to go to pieces before the gale which is now blowing. She is not insured.

Her loss is to be regretted. She is the newest and finest of the Haimen coasting craft.

FAREWELL DINNER.

The members of the staff of the Standard Oil Co. gave a dinner on Saturday night to Mr. W. L. Richard, chief accountant of the Shanghai Office, who is proceeding to New York on leave. The function took place at the Carlton Cafe, and Mr. C. H. Blake, the manager, presided. Covers had been laid for nearly seventy, and the gathering was a thorough success. After dinner Mr. Blake, on behalf of the staff, presented Mr. Richard with a dressing case of Morocco leather with silver fittings. All the utensils were of silver, and a triumph of workmanship.

In responding Mr. Richard said that he wished to tender his sincere thanks for so splendid a tribute of the friendship of the staff. He cordially appreciated the many courtesies shown to him whilst in their midst, and the loyal support all had accorded him. They all had his best wishes for future prosperity and contentment.

The remainder of the evening was given over to an entertaining smoking concert.

DR. VON BURI.

APPROACHING DEPARTURE.

The announcement that Dr. P. von Buri, Consul-General for Germany, is shortly to take his departure from Shanghai, and that his return here is unlikely, will be received with many feelings of regret. Since 1906 Dr. von Buri has ably fulfilled the duties of Consul-General in the port, and while he has won the highest respect and esteem through the capable manner in which he has watched over the interests not alone of the German community but of the whole Settlement, his personality has also earned him much popularity. It is understood that a new sphere has been found for the exercise of Dr. von Buri's abilities, although so far no definite announcement is made of its whereabouts, and in the meantime Dr. von Buri will go to Germany, leaving within the next two or three months.

Dr. von Buri has spent many years in the service of his country, and his record of work is one of the best.

Prior to coming to Shanghai he was Consul-General at Sydney, N.S.W., and before that he had spent some time at Zanzibar. So far his successor in Shanghai has not been named.

A USEFUL GUIDEBOOK.

The Hwa-Mei Book Concern has issued a travellers' handbook for China by Mr. Carl Crow. The book is primarily designed for the traveller or new arrival in China. It contains the information that such a person usually requires, and the work indicates care in compilation and considerable attention to essential details. The preliminary section gives valuable information as to currency, servants, clothing etc., and in the following chapters the reader is able to gain some knowledge of the history, customs and government of the country and of its arts and industries. A part of the volume is devoted to local sketches of the principal points of interest to tourists, giving not only interesting descriptions and histories of the most important stopping places, but also information as to hotels, routes and fares. The book can easily be carried in a pocket, as it is printed on thin paper. A coloured map of China, several plans of cities and a number of excellent half-tone illustrations add to the attractiveness of the work, the price of which is \$2.50.

LISTENERS' LURE.

About eleven o'clock on Christmas eve three Chinese were attracted by the music of a "sing-song" going on at a Japanese house, 487 North Szechuen Road Extension, and stood outside to listen. They had not been there many minutes when a Japanese came out and, so they allege, threw some kind of corrosive acid into their faces. Their cries attracted two Sikh police constables and the Japanese, who gave the name of U. Korgishi, was arrested and taken to North Szechuen Road sub-station. It was here found that the faces of the Chinese had been burned with acid, the sight of the left eye of one of them being almost destroyed. They alleged that the acid was thrown at them without any provocation. The Japanese was put under arrest and on Friday week appeared before Mr. D. Yamamota at the Japanese Consular Court. Sergt. Steele appeared on behalf of the police. The accused, who was charged with unlawfully and maliciously throwing a quantity of corrosive fluid on three Chinese with intent to do them grievous bodily harm, was remanded in custody.

THE FIRE BRIGADE.

The close of the year has seen the personnel of the Shanghai Fire Brigade lose one of the most valued of its number in Mr. A. W. Macphail, who for the past two years, with the exception of a few months, has practically been in

charge. Mr. Macphail had been ten years a member of the Brigade, and his services in all the capacities in which he served cannot be too highly eulogized. He joined in 1902, becoming a member of the De'uge Co., No. 4, and was successively Second Assistant in 1904, First Assistant in 1905, and a year later Foreman, during these years serving under three Chief Engineers, Mr. Kahler, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Bidwell. Mr. Bidwell was injured at a fire in November, 1910, and Mr. Macphail was then in charge of the Brigade, except during the months when the former was able to resume duty prior to his resignation. About this time the Council made the announcement of its intention to secure the services of a paid Chief, and Mr. Macphail continued in charge until a few days ago with the rank of Acting Officer. His resignation has now been accepted, and it may be said that it has been received with the most sincere regret, for the Brigade has had few officers more efficient in any of its branches. Mr. M. W. Pett, the new chief, has now taken charge.

THE BADEN-POWELL SCOUTS.

The Baden-Powell Scouts went into camp at Unkaza at the beginning of Christmas Week and until Thursday evening the weather was very favourable, with the result that the boys got plenty of enjoyable outdoor exercise and showed great keenness in their work, which included competitions that preceded the Camp Display announced to take place on Saturday last, the 28th instant.

On Boxing Day (Thursday) a special competition in Signalling, for the Intermediate Section, was held, and this was won by Patrol-leader Cheetham. Then followed an inter-section competition in Signalling and Despatch-running. The conditions were that a picked team of five boys from each section should compete, the Seniors cover a distance of one mile, the Intermediate section's team three-quarters of a mile, and the Juniors half-a-mile. The Juniors' section won the competition by a very narrow margin, the Senior section taking second place.

The rain which fell on Thursday evening and throughout the night, together with the ensuing snowstorm on Friday, made it impossible to hold the Camp Display announced for Saturday afternoon, and this has therefore been postponed until to-day when the camp will break up.

NOTES FROM SHANTUNG.

SOME SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Choutsun, Dec. 24.

We have arrived at Christmas Eve, 1912 and even the Chinese are beginning to look on Christmas day as a day to be observed, so that officials send their neat new style cards with the

season's greetings in approved western fashion.

It is a pleasant surprise to note in your columns that 160 new missionaries are expected to arrive in China in connexion with the American Presbyterian Mission within the next three years, and if other missions are stirred to emulation it will mean a large accession to the staff of the missions in this province as well as other provinces of the Chinese Republic.

We are notified that commemoration stamps are to be sold shortly and no doubt this easy method of reaping a handsome profit for the Government will be continued in ever varied forms at the expense of the ardent philatelist.

Business in Shantung seems to be reviving and confidence in the Government is getting more and more assured.

Everywhere the queue is quietly dropping off until the wearer of one seems to be peculiar. New style winter hats of velvet or plush are becoming fashionable and the old style cap is becoming conspicuous by its absence. This cannot cause regret as its uselessness for shading the eyes or covering the neck were obvious to all who thought on the matter.

THE ASTOR HOUSE "HOGMANAY."

Some—and perhaps many—who were present at the special New Year's Eve dinner at the Astor House Hotel on Tuesday had the idea that "Hogmanay" was something to eat, after the nature, say, of a haggis or Scotch porridge, but were agreeably surprised to find that it signified a capital new Year's Eve entertainment, which included an excellent Scotch dinner, followed by an informal, but very good concert, and an enjoyable dance. Between 7.30 and 9 p.m. dinner was served to between 350 and 400 guests in the dining-hall of the Hotel, which had been most tastefully decorated for the occasion. After dining, the majority of the guests adjourned to the Banqueting Hall, where an excellent entertainment was given by a company consisting of many of Shanghai's leading amateurs. The hall was prettily decorated, the pillars being encircled with evergreens and the walls festooned with bespangled ivy. The electric lights were subdued by means of red shades, and in the north-east corner of the room a stage had been erected, upon which talented artistes gave an excellent concert, which included sketches, dances, and English, Scotch, Irish and American songs. At midnight, when "Father Time" made his appearance, the hall was cleared for dancing and it was not until well into the first day of the New Year that enjoyment was satiated.

THE DUNOTTAR CASTLE.

The Union Castle liner, Dunottar Castle, which left England on October 1 with a large number

of travellers who are touring the Far East, is now in Shanghai, and is berthed by a French mail steamer off the China Merchants' Lower Wharf. Lord Lyveden is the director of the party which includes the Earl and Countess of Hardwicke, the Earl and Countess of Egmont, Capt. Stanley, R.N.R., Col. and Mrs. Fielden, Major Gwatkin, Lieut. Col. Campbell, and Mrs. Campbell, T. C. Joynes, and S. C. Hodges (secretaries), and O. Mayer, courier. The round of Japan and China have practically been concluded, the vessel having arrived at this port from Tsingtao. On Monday she sailed for Hongkong, and will visit Singapore, Penang, Rangoon, Calcutta, Madras, Colombo, Bombay and the ports of call on the homeward run. At the first port of call in India the party will split up, a number of them being anxious to journey across India, and pick up the vessel again at Bombay.

The holiday-makers, who number 120, came ashore here on Saturday and notwithstanding the snow storm, they did the regular sights. The roads being frost-bound carriages were abandoned, and a long procession of rickshas proceeded to the Chinese city. For nearly an hour the party remained within the walls, after which they returned to lunch at the Astor House. In the afternoon the party dispersed, and in the evening some returned to the ship, but the major portion attended the fancy dress ball at the Astor House and went aboard on Sunday morning.

It is interesting to note that the Dunottar Castle was specially chartered from the Union Castle Line and equipped for the trip and, throughout, she has been kept up to mail requirements.

THE SUNDAY CONCERT.

Sunday afternoon's concert was quite one of the most enjoyable of the season, the programme well varied and abounding in melody, all of the finest and most graceful order. After a long course of Wagner, it has been said, return to Mozart. After tone-poems, it might be added, there is nothing like a course of Haydn, of music essentially pictorial because it aims at nothing but to be beautiful and graceful, and of such there is none better than the Oxford Symphony. Some of the orchestra found difficulty in recapturing the 18th century atmosphere; the first movement was a trifle hard, lacking in half tones, and the earlier part of the Adagio rather uncertain, but the conclusion brightened up and the Minuet and Finale were both well played, light, airy and joyful. The overture to "The Magic Flute" was, perhaps, occasionally more emphatic than Mozart intended, but the rendering as a whole was so spirited and melodious that little fault can be found with it. Then

came Mr. Schrader's clarinet solo, a true piece of Mozart from beginning to end, rendered with equal sympathy and finish. Mr. Schrader received a deserved ovation. The ease and beauty of his playing are worthy of the highest praise. After this the programme jumped about a hundred years to the ever-delightful "Hänsel and Gretel;" yet the sequence of ideas was not broken. Haydn might have written that charming melody "There stands a little man," and the tune of "When past bearing is our grief" would not have been unworthy of Beethoven himself. The selection is admirably arranged and was played *con amore*, particularly the "Witch's Ride," in which the work of drums and double basses was notably good, and the other two extracts already mentioned. Why does not some one revive this most enchanting opera?