

SOME AWFUL DEATHS.

FEARFUL FORMS IN WHICH THE GRIM DESTROYER CALLS.

The Venom of a South Australian spider and the Frightful Angony it causes—A Grain That Makes Its Victim a Raving Maniac.

What is the most awful shape in which death may come to mortal man? Not by fire, nor by water, nor by gunshot. These are mere pleasures to some of the deaths by which you may die.

The most agonizing of all is caused by an insect half the size of a pea—a small black spider. It lives in Peru and South Australia, but a few specimens have reached Europe and America in shiploads of lumber. Not long ago a dock laborer was unlucky enough to come upon one in the Victoria docks while unloading a bark.

The day death dealer dropped upon the back of his hand and dug its fangs into his flesh. The bite itself was nothing, but as soon as the poison began to work the man fainted with pain. Soon afterward he came to and lived three days before the end came.

This spider's venom scorches up the blood vessels and spreads through all the tissues, causing the most fearful agony a human being can have to bear. The worst of it is that the victim lives at least two days, enduring unthinkable anguish the whole time. This spider is luckily not common. It is known as the "specky," and when a man who knows what the bite means is bitten he generally blows out his brains.

Another fearful death is caused by eating a grain called "blat." This sometimes gets mixed with rice, which it resembles. The plant grows in the east, and a few grains of it will drive one into a state of violent mania. The victim becomes drowsy at first and afterward hilarious, then he goes stark, staring mad and tears himself literally in pieces with his fingers, biting mouthfuls out of his limbs. It is bad enough to see such a case, but as for experiencing it—

This grain is only found in remote parts of the east, but both white men and natives are killed by it occasionally in the east, for the plant grows in with the rice crops and can scarcely be told apart, but that the dried grain is of a reddish color.

Of course falling into a vat of boiling metal, as unfortunate workmen sometimes do, sounds bad enough, but it is mercifully quick. There is a South American vine called the "knotter," which is far worse. It twines around any living thing that comes within reach, twisting its long tentacles about a man as a devilish might. These tentacles sear and burn into the flesh like white hot wires, and the victim is dragged into the heart of the foliage and his juices slowly drained, as a spider sucks the blood of a fly.

All say that the pain is worse than they could have believed it possible for a man to feel. The "knotter" is well known to scientists and is, in fact, a sort of huge flytrap plant. Those who have strong instincts of cruelty, coupled with curiosity, sometimes force a dog into the grip of the "knotter" to watch the effects, which are too horrible to describe in detail.

Again, there is nothing very much worse than hydrophobia, when genuine. The patient often lives for days in the acute stage and in his last hours is simply tied up in knots and bent backward and forward like a bow. It is a very rare disease with human beings, for most people bitten by rabid dogs, a small number at most, escape it. In extreme cases the patient actually snarls and bays like any hound, and, next to experiencing it, the worst thing is to watch a case. It is as distressing a spectacle as any man could witness.

There is a snake called the "lanacer," which lives in South America, and is very ready with its fangs. It is a small, brown, insignificant beast, but its bite induces a sort of imaginary swelling all over the victim's body. He feels as if every inch of him were being strained to breaking point, and the agony which results is too awful for words. Generally, however, the excess of pain drives the bitten man mad before very long, and in four hours he dies—a senseless imbecile.

But, all said and done, perhaps there is no death much worse than by the common disease of cancer, which gnaws at the patient's vitals through month after month of unceasing agony and slays its victim at last through sheer exhaustion.—London Spectator.

His Little Contribution. One of the many stories told of the late Dr. Wallace, M. P., is to the effect that when the editor of a local paper in the north asked him "if he would kindly furnish an article on 'a light theological topic,'" Wallace responded with one bearing the title "The Relations Between the Presbyterian Church and Modern Thought." When set up the article made 40 columns, and it became a puzzle to editor and printer how to get rid of it. They began by cutting it in pieces, and whenever the printer said to the editor, "We've got no leader," the reply was, "Eh, mon, just sneak off about a column and a quarter of Wallace." In this way the contribution was used, first working down from the beginning, then upward from the end.—London Academy.

Touched. "I suppose you were touched when your wife gave you that \$50 easy check?" "Of course! How else do you imagine my wife could come by \$50?"—Detroit Journal.

In Belgium at 6 o'clock, evening, you hear from every cottage the voices of father, mother and children and servants saying their prayers, and it is such the same at noon.

NON OMNIS MORIAR.

In the teeth of the gale that hurled me back, In the swirl of the eddy that sucks me down, I—L, tide by tide and tack by tack, Threading the Night where fanged rocks tower, Ere the last spar fell, shall have somehow crawled To that Port whence above no light for me, Where wrecked, if you will, but unscathed, I shall know I am stronger than my best! —Arthur J. Ringler in Bookman.

SAW A DEVILFISH LEAP.

An Experience Which the Spectator Does Not Wish to Renew. When a youngster I was homeward bound from Santa Anna with a cargo of mahogany, and when off Cape Campeche was one calm afternoon leaning over the taffrail, looking down into the blue profound, on the watch for fish, writes a world wide traveler. A gloomy shade came over the bright water, and up rose a fearsome monster, some 15 feet across and in general outline more like a skate or ray than anything else, all except the head.

There, what appeared to be two curling horns, about three feet apart, rose one on each side of the most horrible pair of eyes imaginable. A shark's eyes as he turns sideways under your vessel's counter and looks up to see if any one is coming, are ghastly, green and cruel; but this thing's eyes were all this and much more. I felt that the book of Revelation was incomplete without him, and his gaze haunts me yet.

Although quite sick and giddy at the sight of such a bogey, I could not move until the awful thing, suddenly waving what seemed like mighty wings, soared up out of the water soundlessly to a height of about six feet, falling again with a thunderous splash that might have been heard for miles. I must have fainted with fright, for the next thing I was conscious of was awakening under the rough doctoring of my shipmates.

Since then I have never seen one leap upward in the daytime. At night, when there is no wind, the sonorous splash is constantly to be heard, although why they make that battle leap out of their proper element is not easy to understand. It does not seem possible to believe such awe inspiring horrors capable of playing gamboling.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Unreasonable.

"Yes, we're at sword's point," admitted a suburbanite, while discussing a neighbor. "Fault on both sides, I presume?" "No, sir, not a bit of it. I've been unfortunate, that's all, and he won't listen to explanations."

"Shot his dog, didn't you?" "Yes, I did, but it was this way. I heard the whole street in shrieks and rushed to the window. Boys were climbing trees, mothers hustled their babies inside and locked their doors, and down the center of the street came that dog like all possessed. Of course I thought he was mad. So would anybody, and I shot him.

"Come to find out, he'd been rooting into a bumblebee's nest. I'm no expert on mad dogs and told my neighbor so, but he stormed around as though he had bees in his own hair, and I just dropped him. "What made him madder was that I hit him in the head with an old coil scuttle. I can't see through a tight board fence, can I? I didn't know he was snooking through the alley when I threw the thing away. He was so mad that I didn't recognize his voice. I told him we didn't allow such talk and had him kicked across part of a subdivision before I discovered who he was. Then I apologized, but there's no reason in him."—Detroit Free Press.

He Hated Dem Brits.

When Admiral Cockburn's marauders ravaged Tilghman's Island in 1814, during the war between the United States and Great Britain, they found a different country from the Tilghman's island of today. Then the white population was less than 50. Old George, a Tilghman slave, who afterward belonged to the Harrisons of Long Point, where in his old age he had a comfortable quarter and a boy to wait on him, was one of the victims of Cockburn's marauders and used to tell how "dem ar' Britishers made me run down me own laig, and not only dat, my young master, dey make me kill 'im and skil 'im, hang um!" And the old negro's heart would burn with indignation at the memory. Old George lived to be a hundred, according to the record of his birth kept by his mother's master, and lived in great comfort in his old age. He died in 1856 on Cedar Point farm, the home then of his last master, the late Theodore P. Harrison of Baltimore.—Baltimore Sun.

Composition on Breathing.

A boy, 14 years old, who was told to write all he could about breathing in a composition, handed in the following: "Breath is made of air. We breathe with our lungs, our lights, our liver and kidneys. If it wasn't for our breath we would die when we slept. Our breath keeps the life agoing through the nose when we are asleep. Boys that stay in a room all day should not breathe. They should wait until they get outdoors. Girls kill the breath with corsets that squeezes the diagram. Girls can't holler or run like boys because their diagram is squeezed too much. If I was a girl I had rather be a boy so I can run and holler and have a great big diagram."—Detroit Free Press.

His Experience.

Watts—What was the worst storm you ever encountered? N. Peck—I think it blew at the rate of about 300 miles a minute.—Indianapolis Journal.

The cabbage still grows wild in Greece, where it originated. Radishes are native to China, but have been grown in Europe for centuries.

DIAMOND DOLLARS OF 1804.

Only Four of the Original Coinage of 1804 in Existence.

"Every now and then one reads about the discovery of another of the famous 'diamond dollars' of 1804," said a gentleman of this city who owns one of the finest private collections of coins and medals in the south. "The dollars of that date are popularly supposed to be worth from \$1,500 to \$2,000 apiece, and if a few originals could be produced I dare say they would bring that figure easily enough. But it happens, unluckily, that there are only four on earth, and they are locked up in the vaults of the treasury building at Washington and couldn't be bought at any price. They are what are known as the 'test pieces,' which are always laid aside whenever a new coin is struck, and the rest of the issue is at this moment quietly reposing under several miles of deep blue sea. The true story is rather interesting. In 1804 the mint at Philadelphia is known to have turned out 19,579 silver dollars. That was the entire issue, barring the test pieces I have just spoken of, and it was never put into circulation. The whole lot, just as it came from the stamping presses, was dumped into an iron chest and put on board a merchantman bound for China. It was directed to the captain of a United States frigate then in oriental waters, and was intended to be used in paying certain expenses connected with the service. The merchantman ran into a Chinese typhoon and went to the bottom, where to the best of my information she still remains, iron chest and all, and that is the reason your Uncle Sam is the only collector in the world who has a complete set of American dollars. Every other collection, including my own, is short one issue, and the gap will never be filled until the sea gives up its own."

"Do you mean to tell us, then," said a listener to the foregoing, "that all the 'diamond dollars' now in private cabinets are counterfeits?" "By no means," replied the collector. "I own an 1804 dollar myself, and there are at least three others, to my knowledge, in the south. They were issued by the government and are perfectly good and legal coins, but they are not originals. They are what are known technically as 'restrikes.' In the early days, when the mints had a few coins left over from one year to another they struck the date by striking them with a special die, an operation that can always be detected by an expert. For some reason or other, nobody knows just why, a few dollars of the 1800 issue were restruck in 1804 and put in circulation. It is probable that the total number was not over 40 or 50, and a good many have been lost. The ones in existence are worth \$150 apiece, and you may rest assured that all the 'diamond dollars' not mere imitations belong to this little lot of restrikes.

"Of course, some of them have been sold to green collectors as originals, and I was myself the innocent cause of such a transaction only a few years ago. A friend of mine, who lives in an adjoining state, and who owns a great many rare and beautiful coins, telegraphed me one day asking whether \$500 was too much for a genuine 1804 dollar. I took it for granted that he knew the facts about the issue, and after puzzling over the message for a considerable time concluded that it was an obscure joke of some kind and that I was simply too stupid to see the point. So I wired back advising him to buy a bushel at that figure, and he promptly closed the deal. It turned out afterward that the coin was a restrike, and my friend has never quite forgiven me. What deceived him was the fact that the piece was known positively to have been locked up in an old chest at Savannah since 1812. That did away with the counterfeit theory, and the only thing he was doubtful about was the price."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

AN ENGLISH "TREAT."

The Difference Between the British and American Methods.

I was constantly struck, says Colonel T. W. Higginson in The Atlantic, with the genuine spirit of hospitality among Englishmen toward Americans, as such, even those with whose pursuits they might have almost nothing in common, and for whom they had not the slightest reason to put themselves out. I liked this none the less for its having its definite limitations as to pecuniary obligations, and the like, including everything in the nature of "treating," all this being in my opinion a weak point in our more gushing or more self-conscious habit.

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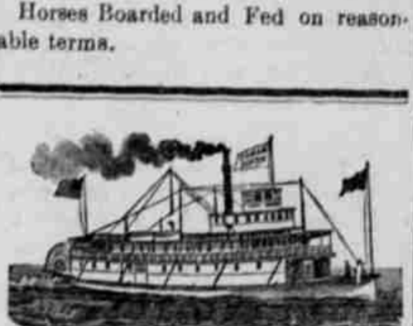
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POSTAL SCHEDULE.

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