

DOES DEATH STING?

An Answer From a Medical Point of View. Dr. G. L. Beardley concludes that the dread of dying is quite as intense as the instinct of self-preservation. Indeed, it is not improbable, adds the doctor, that numbers would care less about living were the modes of leaving the world a theme for happy contemplation, or an innovation to the routine of plodding that was agreeable.

PHANTOM SHIPS.

Some Odd Stories Showing the Hold the Imagination Had on Ancient Mariners. We are not surprised that the ancient mariners peopled the sea, in their quaint mythology, with imaginary creatures, or invested the most common things and occurrences with prognostic influences. Following them with their sea-faring delusions, came the monks of the Middle Ages, pretending to chronicle, with scrupulous accuracy, saintly interpositions at sea, etc., etc.

and would be driven into port when ever the prayers for the souls of the lost kinsmen had failed to be efficacious. In "Credulities Past and Present" is an account of what follows such a mysterious visitation. The widows and children and friends of the seamen who were supposed to have been drowned, would rush to the quay. Cries of recognition would arise, but no returning cry would be heard from the crew. The bells would sound the hour of midnight, and a fog would steal over the sea, and which the vessel would disappear.

There is a legend of a Herr Von Falkenberg who was compelled to beat about the ocean till the Day of Judgment, on board a ship without a helm or steersman, playing at dice for his soul with the devil. It was common for seamen who traversed the German Ocean to declare that they had met the phantom ship. Some legend of the kind suggested to Coleridge his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

The Flying Dutchman was a name given to one of these phantom ships. It scudded before the wind under a heavy press of sail when other ships were afraid to show an inch of canvas. She was generally declared to have been seen in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, and was always regarded as the worst of all possible omens. Her crew committed some atrocious crime; the plague broke out among them; no harbor would consent to shelter them; the apparition of the ship still haunts the seas in which the crimes were perpetrated, etc.

It was probably no uncommon occurrence in early times for seafarers to fall in with ships abandoned to the winds and waves, with corpses on board. Such instances may have suggested the legends. On the other hand they may have had their origin in the looming up, or apparent suspension in the air, of some ship out of sight—a phenomenon sometimes witnessed at sea, and caused by unequal refraction in the lower strata of the atmosphere.

HANDEL.

The Circumstances Which Led Him to Become a Musician. Handel was born at Halle, in Saxony, February 23d, 1685. Unlike most of the great musicians, he does not seem to have inherited his talent; his father was a barber and surgeon, nor can we discover in the family any special love for music.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

—France is the greatest egg-producing country in the world. —Berlin has 410 newspapers and magazines. Forty-five are official, 77 political, 148 artistic and scientific, 60 commercial, 20 religious, and 60 literary.

—Every day the London postmen walk a distance equal to twice the circumference of the earth. There are 4,030 of them, and they average twelve miles a day each. —German colonists in West Africa have minutely examined the district of Angra Pequena for minerals, and find that the ground is rich in copper and lead, while traces are also visible of silver and gold.

—When you dine with the Viceroy of India you present yourself in the reception room in your regulation swallow-tail, but before you go to dinner you change it for a nice, cool, white linen jacket. —The King of Saxony is badly off for money and offers to sell the "Madonna San Sisto" of Raphael for \$750,000.

—In Paris a telephonic ticket at half a franc is issued at any of Post-offices, which entitles the holder to a five minutes' conversation with persons at any other of the city Post-offices, or of the Telephonic Company's stations. The Telephonic Company offers, at the same rate conversations at any of its eleven stations with persons at any other station, or at the residences of any of its members.

—The cost of the last Lord Mayor's pageant was \$19,200; \$8,570 on dinners, \$5,125 on the procession, \$2,150 on decorations, \$300 on music, \$1,325 on printing, and \$1,675 on general expenses. Of this sum the new Lord Mayor contributed \$10,000 and each of the Sheriffs \$5,000. The figures lead London Truth to remark that there may possibly come a time when Lord Mayors and Sheriffs will be elected for some other reason than that they are prepared to spend money on such tomfooleries.

THE UPPER ENGADINE.

A Noted Health Resort in One of the Swiss Valleys. In the east of Switzerland, among the highlands of the Grisons, lies a long, broad valley, which although out of the track of the majority of tourists, is visited in summer by some thousands of English people in search of health or pleasure. This upper Valley of the Inn, or Engadine, can also boast of a winter season during which St. Moritz is the home alike of persons suffering from pulmonary complaints, nervous diseases, and other disorders, and of those who come for the skating and tobogganning.

—At a recent meeting of the Boston Society for Medical Observation, Dr. Folsom cited the vital statistics of Massachusetts for forty years, as showing a decrease in number of deaths from consumption in that State. Only about one-sixth of the total death rate is now caused by the disease. The doctor thought physicians were too much inclined to give unfavorable prognoses in such cases, and he advised keeping patients quietly in one place, rather than shifting them about in search of a more favorable climate.

—The Baroness de Struve, wife of the Russian Minister, was addressed in French at a recent White House reception. As she replied in English, the society belle with whom she had been conversing asked: "Why do you not speak French, Madam? I am sure you can." The reply of the Baroness was a courteous rebuke to the reflection on her English: "Yes, I speak French, but not in the house of the American President. Though I speak English poorly, I speak it here, of course, as well as I can."

highest parts of the mountains, but does not long continue in the valley, and the sublimity of the view is thus improved by the dignity which the white mantle lends to the surrounding hills. The summer, however, like the spring, is, in the Engadine, a transition period of very brief duration. Soon the snowfall becomes more heavy, and the "snowing-in" begins. In two or three days several feet may fall, and one morning finds the ground thickly covered with a garment which will remain for about five months.

—The "snowing-in" period is often supposed to be an extremely objectionable and almost intolerable time. Like so many other things, it is not so bad as it is painted. No doubt the thawing of fresh-fallen snow is not pleasant, and the large quantity which often falls tends to make it still more disagreeable; but in a high-lying place, like St. Moritz, for instance, the water quickly runs off, and owing to the extreme dryness of the air large quantities of moisture speedily evaporate.

—No English peer or peeress can be arrested for debt, need serve on juries, or be called out in the militia, and they do not swear on oath, but on honor, except when witnesses in any court. They can sit in any court in England with their hats on, can wear a sort of uniform as peers, can carry arms, but not in their pockets, and, if they commit treason or felony, they must be tried by their peers.

—The fate of the crowned heads has been minutely studied by a French statistician, who gives a list of the unfortunate rulers of the world. He reckons that up to the present time 2,540 Emperors and Kings have governed 64 nations. Of these sovereigns 300 were driven from their thrones, 64 abdicated, 24 committed suicide, 12 became insane, 100 fell dead in battle, 123 were made prisoners, 25 died martyrs, 151 were assassinated, and 108 legally condemned to death and executed.

—The amusement appreciated that many persons come from England for a short holiday of a month or six weeks about Christmas in order to enjoy it. It sometimes happens that no snow falls while the five lakes in the Engadine are freezing over, and, in consequence, skating on them is possible. Such has been the case for several weeks this year. Many of the winter visitors, hale and invalid alike, spend the whole day, from sunrise to sunset, on the rinks, and this for the greater part of the four months during which the water continues frozen. Lunch is partaken of on benches on the ice, and although surrounded by snow, people are warmed, and even scorched, by the fierce heat of the sun, which is not only poured down directly on them, but also reflected from the surface of the snow and ice around. It is thus that so many invalids are here enabled to regain their strength.

—A champion eater signalled his arrival at Hull, Cal., by eating twenty-seven raw eggs at one sitting. After his repast he offered to wager that he could eat three of the largest cans of oysters in town and seven dozen eggs. Those who were present thought he could, and his offer was refused.

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RUSSIAN PRISONS.

The Horrors of the Fate Reserved to Political Prisoners.

When an accused nihilist is sentenced to Siberia, his friends "congratulate each other and say that their beloved prisoner was born under a lucky star." And well they may, hard as is the fate of exiles to "the land of cold and misery, of brutal task-masters, and cruel punishments," when they think of the Central Prison—where in 1878 the political prisoners enforced a demand to be treated as well as murderers by refusing to eat anything whatever until their claim was given attention, a resolution they maintained for eight days and nights—or, worse still, of the famous fortress of Peter and Paul. From "Peter and Paul" three letters written in the prisoners' blood have reached the outside world, and Siepiak has held them in his hand. After reading, one does not wonder that exile and death are eagerly sought in preference to this imprisonment.

—The small windows are on a level with the river, which overflows them when the Neva rises. The thick iron bars of the grating, covered with dirt, shut out most of the little light that also might filter through these holes. If the rays of the sun never enter the cells of the upper floor, it may easily be imagined what darkness reigns below. The walls are moldering, and dirty water continually drips from them. But most terrible are the rats. In the brick floors large holes have been left open for the rats to pass through. I express myself thus intentionally. Nothing would be easier than to block up these holes, and yet the reiterated demands of the prisoners have always been passed by unnoticed, so that the rats enter by scores, try to climb upon the beds and to bite the prisoners. It is in these hideous dungeons that the condemned to death spend their last hours. Kvatkovsky, Fresniakoff and Soukanoff passed their last nights here. At the present moment, among others, there is a woman with a little child at her breast. This is Jakimova. Night and day she watches over her babe lest he should be devoured by the rats.

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THE WORM WILL TURN.

A Granger Who Didn't Care to Act As If He Owned the Earth.

The other day five or six young men, who couldn't be hired for money to saw a stick of wood in two, were putting in the hardest kind of work on Washington avenue with a bat and ball. While they were at it a farmer drove up with his wife and looked for a safe place to hitch while doing some trading. The wagon had scarcely come to a standstill when the flying ball hit one of the horses, and something very near a runaway was the result. As the animals were being calmed down the ball came again and hit the wife on the head, knocking her backwards on the straw and renewing the excitement. A pedestrian held the horses while the farmer tried to soothe his wife, but before she could be helped out the whole gang of boys came rushing after the flying ball, and the team ran into a stable and wrecked the wagon twenty dollars worth.

—"I'll tell you what, old man!" exclaimed one of the crowd which quickly assembled, "I'd make somebody pay for this!" "Shoo! now, but would you?" "And I'd lick those boys if it cost me my farm!" put in a second.

—A town in Buffalo County, D. T., has been named in honor of the first lady resident, Slade. Mrs. Slade was nearly killed in a cyclone there in 1883.



GEN. A. M. WEST. Gen. West has long been a prominent citizen of Mississippi. He was a brigadier general in the Confederate army; is at present a planter at Holly Springs, Miss., and financially interested in some large enterprises of that state.

The Political Writer.

"Yes," said the editor to the new political writer, "your article in some regards is very well written, but there are fatal objections to printing it as it stands. Unless you can fix it over a little we shall be obliged to reject it. Yes, the premises are all correct and your argument is perfect, but then you have neglected to say anything about the political cauldron beginning to boil, or the marshaling of the clans, or the tramp of the cohorts, or the grand uprising of the people in support of our man, or the political death of the other fellow. These little matters seem to you, perhaps, of no consequence, but they are essential, sir, indisputably essential to a political article, sir, and without them a political article isn't worth the paper it is written upon."

From One Point of View.

On the train the other day was a negro singing troupe, and the prominent "colored gemman" of the band seated himself in the smoking car. When the conductor came along he handed him some tickets, saying: "These tickets are for the three ladies in do-older car—two colored ladies and one uncolored."

Mens that are Getting too High-Toned.

An exchange says that a Colorado man recently laid an egg surrounded by a band. Things have come to a pretty pass if the hens aren't going to lay any more eggs unless music is furnished for the occasion.



GEN. RUSSELL A. ALGER. Gen. Alger's record is that of a successful self-made man left an orphan at the age of eleven. He worked and studied until he was admitted to the bar at the age of 23. His health gave way from excessive work and study so that he was compelled to abandon law and engage in the lumber business. He entered the army and rose to the rank of major-general. Since 1865 he has become a giant among the lumber dealers of this country.

How the Fire was Prevented.

Little Ike Schamburg prevented his father's store from being burned down the other day. He said to the school teacher: "I am not coming to school to-morrow." "Why not, Isaac?" "Because we are going to have a fire in our house to-morrow. I heard pa tell ma so last night." When Ike went home he told his father about the conversation with the teacher, and although most of the goods had been moved out of the store and the stock was insured for twice its value, the conflagration has not yet taken place. Little Ike, however, has not found it any too cold.

Taking Care of the Sick.

"Oh, dear," sighed a farmer's wife, wearily, as she dropped into a chair after a hard day's work, "I feel just as if I were going to be sick. My head throbs, my back aches dreadfully, and—" "By gosh," interrupted the farmer, starting up and seizing his hat, "that reminds me. I forgot to give the two-year-old colt his condition powders to-night, and he's been a wheezin' all day," and he hurried to his barn.



EKN. E. BREWSTER. The father of Mr. Brewster ranked high at the Philadelphia bar. Young Brewster graduated at Princeton when 15, was admitted to the bar when 23, and has won for himself enviable distinction at the head of the legal profession. A sad accident has marred his personal appearance, but at the age of 68 years he still retains the gallantry and preciseness of dress which has been a marked characteristic of him. His wife is a beautiful and highly accomplished lady.