NARROW ESCAPES

Hudson Maxim Has Figured In Some Perilous Incidents.

LUCKY AT CHEATING DEATH.

On One Gun Testing Occasion a Sudden Impulse to Run, Which He Obeyed, Was the Means of Saving His Life—A Magazine That Got Its Second Wind.

One of the most thrilling adventures in my experience took place at the government proving grounds at Sandy Hook, N. J., when the United States government was testing maximite before adopting it.

Near a light frame building in which I was filling shells with maximite, a ten inch gun was being tested. A number of shots had been fired from the big gun. Just as I had concluded my work and started for the wharf to take the government tug for New York, the signal was sounded for another shot. I was walking along a stretch of railway track directly behind the gun.

At that instant I remembered that several years before, when one of these guns was being tested, the breechlock had blown out, passed through the bombproof and killed six officers and men, but I argued with myself that the chance was infinitely remote that the breechlock would be blown out of the present gun on this discharge at the very instant I was in range, but upon a sudden impulse I ran with all my might.

The gun was discharged. I looked round just in time to see the huge breechlock pass through a building near the one in which I had been at work. It came up the track, striking and breaking one of the rails over which I had passed. It ricocheted against the top of the old granite fort and glanced high into the air. A shower of stones and debris fell over a wide area and many fragments struck the ground close to me.

I walked back to the scene of the accident and found that the windows in the little building where I had been filling maximite shells were completely riddled with partly burned cylinders of smokeless powder that had been blown from the gun.

I once had another curious experience at Sandy Hook during some trials of the Maxim automatic machine gun.

Among the severe tests to which the gun was subjected was one intended to simulate what might occur in making a landing upon the seashore, where the mechanism of the gun might get filled with sand. The test is known as the "sand test."

The gun being tested at the time was of the kind using black gunpowder cartridges, for it was before the introduction of smokeless powder. There was so much energy in the recoil of the barrel that a great deal of sand could be thrown into the mechanism without interfering with the working of the gun.

The commanding officer did not arrive to see the gun fired until after the board in charge had completed the test. He then appeared and demanded that the firing should be continued for his benefit. The chairman of the experimental board demurred, saying that the gun had passed through the test admirably and that it was too bad to fire it more than was absolutely necessary, with its mechanism filled with sand. But the commander insisted.

A schooner was approaching near the line of fire. The commander said he only wanted to see a few rounds fired and that the firing would be completed before the schooner would come within range. Accordingly a belt of 333 rounds was inserted, and the firing begun. After perhaps fifty rounds were fired the command was given "Cease firing," but the gun kept right on. It afterward proved that the trigger was blocked by sand, so that it was impossible to stop the gun. The schooner came into range, and the bullets flew over and around her.

My assistant, who was firing the gun, did his best to work the trigger and stop it. It did not occur to him on the instant to unlimber the gun and swing it round so as to bring the schooner out of range. As the gun fired at the rate of 750 shots a minute the firing was all over inside half a minute.

Fortunately no damage was done. When the same gun was undergoing a sand test at Annapolis, Md., I came very near being killed by it.

The gun had passed successfully through a severe sand test, but the officer in charge wanted to see whether he could put enough sand into the gun to stop it. So he had the gun box filled full. The gun fired about 150 rounds and then stopped. My assistant threw down the safe—that is to say, locked the trigger, so that it could not be pulled—and began clearing the gun box.

Thinking that the gun was safe, I was just about to step round in front of it. Suddenly it fired a dozen or more shots so close to me that my clothes were seared by the powder gases.

One of the tests made at Annapolis was to fire a Maxim gun vertically into the air. We had fired a couple of hundred shots in this manner, when something struck very near us. It then occurred to the officer in charge that what goes up must necessarily come down. Firing ceased and we sought cover for a few minutes to avoid the leaden rain.—Hudson Maxim in Youth's Companion.

The best remedy for wrongs done us is to forget them.—Syrus.

Posted on Autographs.

During an interval in London W. G. Scully, so he tells in "Further Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer," had rooms in Pimlico with a landlady of snobbish tendencies, who made a cult of "superior persons." He tells this amusing experience:

"I had been for a short visit to Rudyard Kipling at Rottingdean and had brought back a bunch of roses from his garden. Seeing that Mrs. Wand was so proud of her celebrities, I thought I would let her know that I, too, knew a celebrity, so when she came to set the breakfast table next morning I pointed to the flowers and said:

"'There, Mrs. Wand, you would never guess where these roses came from. They came from the garden of the great Mr. Kipling.'

"'Mr. Kipling? 'Oo's 'e?'

"'Good gracious!' I exclaimed. 'Surely you know who Mr. Kipling is. Why, his autograph is worth a guinea?'

"Mrs. Wand left the room without replying. She returned a few minutes later with a look of skepticism on her face and, as she put down the toast rack, remarked:

"'Well 'e ought to be good lookin' at that.'"

Monument to a Quack.

"That the men who make great medical discoveries and who perform wonderful surgical operations are honored in life and that imposing monuments to their memory are reared when they have passed away seems only fitting," says a writer in the Hamburg Fremdenblatt, "but that a quack whose name as such has for generations been known in Germany should be thus honored is remarkable. There are not many children in Germany who do not know the song which begins thus:

"I am the Dr. Eisenbart.
Zwillewillewilkomosa!
I cure the people by my art.
Zwillewillewilkomosa!
The blind I treat so that they walk,
And the lame I teach to talk.
Zwillewillewilkam—heirassa,
Zwillewillewilkom—bom!

"A stately monument showing Dr. Eisenbart extracting a tooth from a writhing boy, the work of Professor Eberlein, has been erected at Hann-Munden, where the 'wonder doctor' was born."

Time's Changes.

Why is it that laws which worked very well fifty or sixty years ago are being discarded? Why is it that laws which a quarter century ago would have been laughed down are getting upon the books of every state in the Union? Why is it that there are new ideas in teaching, new ideas about the liberty of the individual, new ideas about a man's relationship with his neighbor? Why is it, in short, that there is a vast discontent with old institutions and old ways? It is because the world has outgrown the government, the ideas, the habits of thought that fitted easily and serenely enough into the lives of our great-grandparents, but which are creaking in their joints now. Life today is a very different thing from life fifty or sixty years ago.—Toledo Blade.

A Map That Failed.

The French National library in the Rue de Richelieu, Paris, is full of wonders for the lovers of history. One of its treasures is a map of North and South America as French possessions. The map is dated 1564, and here is the explanation of it: Catherine de Medicis, the queen of Henry II. and mother of Francois II., Charles I. and Henri III., dreamed once of the conquest of the two Americas. She even named viceroys, one for North America and the other for South America. They were on their way to the new world when the queen's audacious plan fell through because of events at home. The queen, however, had a map made showing her projected possessions under the French flag.—New York Sun.

Car of the Czar.

The private car of the czar of Russia is said to be practically dynamite proof, and owing to its weight it could not be run on most of the European lines. The car is elegantly furnished and also contains a chapel, where prayers are offered for his safety. The czar travels with only one chef, who is well along in years and who served his father and for awhile the grandfather of the present German emperor.

Near to It.

Hoax—I thought you said that the man was a musician.

Joax—Nonsense!

"You certainly told me he wrote melodies."

"I told you he was a composer of hets. He sells soothing sirup."—London Telegraph.

Presence of Mind.

Mother (to daughter, who is being carried off through the air by a blast of wind that has caught her umbrella)—Hold tight, Emilia! I will go and telephone to the aviation ground and get them to send an aeroplane after you!—Lustige Blatter.

Big Guns Bend.

One of the most serious problems of army and navy engineers is the bending of great guns by their own weight, wire wound guns being the worst offenders in this particular.

Ambiguous.

"You remember I missed you several times last year."

"Yes," said the guide.

"Well, I'm a better shot now."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

There is a real difference between those who have something to say and those who want to say something.—John Timothy Stone.

PUZZLES TO SCIENCE.

Familiar Problems That Man's Mighty Brain Cannot Solve.

There are many familiar things that puzzle science. Here are some of the problems that are unsolved riddles to the scientific sharps:

What sleep is.
How an eye sees.
What electricity is.
How a firefly lights its lamp.
How a seed grows into a tree.
How a rose makes its perfume.
Whence the sun gets its heat.
Why the compass points to the north.
What makes a bird build its first nest.
What causes the sex of a baby or an animal.
What happens when food is oxidized in the system.
What change takes place in iron when it is magnetized.
What makes rain fall in some places and not in others.
How a bloodhound tracks a man by the smell of his footprints.
What makes an apple fall to the ground and not fly off in the air.
How a bird can fly in the dark through a forest without hitting the trees.
How glands that are identical in structure secrete absolutely different fluids.
Why iron alone, and iron only in particular states, is capable of being magnetized.
What happens when two volumes of hydrogen and one of oxygen are combined to form water.
The difference between a live man and a dead man or a live dog and a dead dog—in other words, what life is.—New York World.

SHORT CHANGE GRAFT.

An "Honest" Industry That Does Big Business In New York.

"One form of honest graft a hotel keeper has to fight the hardest in this town is 'accidental short changing,'" said the manager of a very popular hotel near the Grand Central depot, famous for its oyster bar.

"The same sort of 'honest graft' obtains at almost every cash changing place in the city where there is a netting on the cashier's desk to protect the cash and a lower bar of wood to hold up the netting or glass screen. This bar of wood or metal runs across the hand hole for change. The cashiers have figured out the angle of vision of all men, short and tall, and the distance they stand from the desk to receive their change.

"Say a dollar is changed to take out 30 cents. The 'accidental short change' artist will push forward the 70 cents in coin, but his hand will halt one dime that is hidden from the angle of vision of the man getting change by the line of the bar over the cash hand hole. If the man is in a hurry or absentminded he grabs the change he sees and rushes off without one dime. Always stop, stoop and look if in doubt.

"And you would be surprised to know how much money is left on cashiers' counters, box offices, subway ticket booths and other places. I'll wager $100,000 is short changed annually in New York. They never call you back."—New York World.

Did as He Was Ordered.

A new boy had gone on board a West India ship, upon which a painter had also been employed to paint the ship's side. The painter was at work upon a staging suspended under the ship's stern.

The captain, who had just got into a boat alongside, called out to the new boy, who stood leaning over the rail, "Let go the painter!"

Everybody should know that a boat's painter is the rope which makes it fast, but this boy did not know it. He ran aft and let go the ropes by which the painter's staging was held. Meantime the captain was wearied with waiting to be cast off.

"You rascal!" he called. "Why don't you let go the painter?"

"He's gone, sir," said the boy briskly. "He's gone—pots, brushes and all!"—London Standard.

Badly Timed.

"It's a great pity," said the convicted burglar to his counsel, "that you couldn't have made that closing speech of yours at the opening of the case."

"I don't see how that would have improved matters," said the advocate.

"It would, though," explained his client. "Then the jury would have been asleep when the evidence came on, and I'd have stood some chance."

Plausible.

"The trouble with this tooth," said the dentist, probing it with a long, slender instrument, "is that the nerve is dying."

"It seems to me, doctor," groaned the victim, "you ought to treat the dying with a little more respect."

Her Progress.

"The last time I saw you you were complaining about your servant being slow."

"Oh, she's progressing now!"

"Is she really?"

"Yes; she's getting slower and slower."—Exchange.

Plenty to Fall Back On.

"I'm afraid my eyes are going back on me," said the egotist.

"Don't worry," replied the modest man. "You have an inexhaustible supply."—Chicago Record-Herald.

To wish is of little account. To succeed men must earnestly desire, and this desire must shorten the sleep.—Ali.

GOT RID OF THE BORE.

The Method, Though, Was Less Tactful Than Clemenceau Intended.

M. Clemenceau, the French statesman, had for many years an excellent and faithful servant, whose education had unfortunately been somewhat neglected. In point of fact, he could neither read nor write. Some time ago a venerable senator who was also a venerable bore called on M. Clemenceau and asked to see him. The latter replied through the faithful servant that he was exceedingly busy and would be much obliged if the senator could find time to call again next morning. But the senator insisted. It was, he said, an affair of the utmost urgency, and tomorrow would be too late. So he scribbled the object of his visit on the back of his card, which he gave to the servant to take to his master.

M. Clemenceau, somewhat annoyed by this persistence, added a second line to the card and gave it to the servant to take to his secretary, M. Coussol. Now, the second line ran thus: "Coussol, get rid of this old fool in five minutes."

The servant went to look for M. Coussol, but M. Coussol was not there. What was to be done? He had not the courage to disturb his master again, so he took the card to the expectant senator, and, "Very sorry, sir," he said apologetically, "M. Clemenceau is busy, and M. Coussol is out, but my master has written the reply here if you would care to read it, sir."

The senator read and left the house, and since then M. Clemenceau counts one supporter less in the upper chamber.

Good Cheer.

After every storm the sun will shine, for every problem there is a solution, and the soul's indefeasible duty is to be of good cheer.—W. R. Alger.

An Erratic Echo.

The late Sir John Leng had traveled in most quarters of the globe. On one occasion when visiting Spain he was asked at a certain spot by a traveling companion to test the powers of what was declared to be a wonderful echo. Sir John, slowly and deliberately, in rounded tones uttered the words "Dun-dee Ad-ver-tis-er," the name of the paper he owned. "Dundee Courier and Argus," the name of the opposition paper, came back as the echo! Sir John's friends had played him a trick.

Didn't Give Him a Chance.

"Say, ma," piped up little Johnny after the minister had finished his call and taken his departure, "when Mr. Meeker was here every time you stopped talkin' a minute he would start in to say somethin' an' git as fur every time as 'I dare say,' an' then you would start goin' ag'in an' talk a lot more, an' that is the way it kept on right along an' the only thing he said all the time he was here was 'I dare say,' 'I dare say,' every few minutes."

"Well, what of it? I am not to blame for Mr. Meeker's paucity of ideas, am I?" demanded Johnny's mother, somewhat impatiently.

"I dunno 'bout that," said Johnny doubtfully, as if not exactly sure what was meant by paucity of ideas, "but anyhow, ma, you orter give him a chanst. When he started in with 'I dare say,' why didn't you keep quiet jest once, ma, an' let him go ahead an' say what he was goin' to an' have it over with?"—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Liked It Loud.

Of Dr. Richard Strauss, the great composer, Mr. Wile says he makes no secret of his passion for extraordinary orchestral effects. During the general rehearsal of his famous opera, "Electra"—which Mr. Wile describes as "that monumental example of musical uproar"—Dr. Strauss came tearing down the central aisle of the Royal Opera at

"LOUDER! LOUDER!"

Dresden while Mme. Schumann-Heink, in the part of Clytemnestra, was struggling with a top note. Beads of perspiration already bespangled the brows of the madly playing orchestra, and as he ran toward them Dr. Strauss shrieked at the pitch of his voice: "Louder! Louder! I can still hear the singing!"—London Answers.

In the Dark.

The late Professor Jebb once asked a student to construe a passage from the Greek. The undergraduate, who was unprepared, began, "The dawn—the dawn"— "Yes, yes; go on!" "The dawn—was beginning to break." "Yes, sir; go on!" But the student knew no more, and he began again, "The dawn was beginning to break."

"Sir, sit down until you see daylight!" said the professor.