

STONE OF THE SEPULCHRE

A Visit to the Ancient Tombs of Damascus.

Underground Cavities that Were Once the Tombs of the Great.

A correspondent of the New Orleans Times-Democrat says in a letter from the Holy Land: Seldom have I been so interested in an antiquity as I was in the door of this royal cemetery. To the left of this hole was a groove, in which a monster block of granite, shaped like a millstone, fitted quite snugly. One man from below could roll this stone over the portal, if he was initiated; but 100 could not move it if they knew not the art. A low, dark passage, scarcely large enough to admit a man, led to this ancient but ingenious door, and was the only avenue by which it could be opened prior to the excavations of our own times. The mouth of this secret passage was neatly closed with a trap door, placed on the very brink of a pit. Only those thoroughly acquainted with the place could ever have detected the methods of entrance. Evidently grave ghouls were feared in those days and here, as much as now in your own land.

Now I can understand how the stone was "rolled away" from the door of the Lord's sepulcher! Now I can understand why "that other disciple" stooped down and looked into the tomb.

We entered the hole with lighted candles, and prowled around to our hearts' content in the magnificent apartments of rock beyond. The chisel marks on the walls were as fresh as if they had been made yesterday, save where tourists, yearning after cheap immortality, have used candle flames to smoke their names upon the stone. There appeared to be four large chambers, with numerous apses hewn out for the reception of one, two or three bodies. Of course the sarcophagi and most of the doors have long since yielded to the onslaughts of time and Christian vandals. One marble sarcophagus is still exhibited at the Louvre, I believe.

Mr. Floyd told me of a touching tragedy which occurred some twenty years ago in these tombs. A party got to joking as to the amount of courage it would require to visit the tombs at dead of night, alone, without a light. A wager of one pound was the result, and one supposedly brave man agreed to come that night and stick his knife into a log of wood which was deposited there for this purpose. Night came. The party accompanied the man to a grove near by with lanterns, examined his knife, and then waited while he made the descent. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes passed, but the man did not return. The others then became alarmed and went in search for him. They found him in the appointed vault, lying over the log in question—dead!

An investigation developed the fact that the knife was still sticking in the log, but had passed through one of the man's coat tails. It was pitchy dark, and doubtless the man had become frightened almost to distraction as he crept to the log. In this excited condition it is supposed that he stuck the knife through his garment. Then, when he arose, and was suddenly pulled back, it is hardly a wonder that the life departed out of him from sheer terror.

Undoubtedly these subterranean cavities were once the tombs of great men; but scholars differ as to the antiquity which they represent. Some throw them back to the time of David, while others maintain that they are not more ancient than the Herodian age. As near as I can learn, the majority of thinkers incline to the belief that the tombs were constructed for Helena, the widowed Queen of Monobazus, King of Adiabene, during the time of the famine predicted by Agabua in the days of Claudius Caesar.

A Long Pneumatic Tube.

A company is getting ready to build a pneumatic tube for carrying letters and small packages from Chicago to New York. The idea at first seems impracticable, but on examination it turns out to be feasible. Two tubes are to be made of brass, which will run side by side, although it is said one tube will be tried at first. A powerful engine with an exhaust-wheel is to be stationed at one end. It is said

that if the tube is properly made and planted no air will escape. The right of way it is believed can be secured for nothing, or at a nominal expense and the main cost will be the tube and the engines and stations. A letter, a sample of grain, or package of any kind which is to be sent, is inclosed in a leather ball. A ball presents the least friction as a rolling object, and the leather is to be stiff and heavy. A continuous current of air is passing through the tube constantly. With one pipe the plan is to reverse the engine every hour—the first hour forcing air into it at the Chicago end and sending packages to New York, the next hour exhausting the air at Chicago and drawing the packages as quickly back. The men who have it in charge do not say how long it will take to send a package this way, but claim to be able to do it in less than a minute. Stations will be established at the important cities on the route. It is expected to pay a large profit, and to do the business of the telegraph companies, express companies, and the mail. They say the scheme of sending crude petroleum by a pipe for long distances, as is now done, was laughed at at first and that this one is more practical, if possible, and not nearly so costly, as the pipes are to be small and can go around curves and over hills as well as on a level.—New York Graphic.

Moral Courage in Every-Day Life.

Have the courage to discharge a debt while you have the money in your pocket.

Have the courage to do without that which you do not need, however much your eyes may covet it.

Have the courage to speak your mind when it is necessary you should do so, and to hold your tongue when it is prudent you should do so.

Have the courage to speak to a friend in a "seedy" coat, even though you are in company with a rich one, and richly attired.

Have the courage to own that you are poor, and thus disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.

Have the courage to tell a man why you will not lend him your money.

Have the courage to "cut" the most agreeable acquaintance you have, when you are convinced that he lacks principle. "A friend should bear with a friend's infirmities," but not with his vices.

Have the courage to wear old clothes until you can pay for the new ones.

Have the courage to prefer comfort and propriety to fashion in all things.

Have the courage to acknowledge your ignorance, rather than seek credit for knowledge under false pretenses.

Have the courage to provide an entertainment for your friends within your means—not beyond.

Have the courage to take a good paper, and pay for it annually in advance.—Christian Witness.

"Kangarooing."

Kangarooing is the most interesting sport in Australia, says a resident of that country. It is one of the most exciting sports in the world. Large meets are organized, parties of from twenty to thirty joining in these hunts. They ride to the kangaroo grounds, and as soon as one is sighted the two dogs are released and the horses are given their heads. If the Australian horse is well up in the business, and if you let him take you instead of you trying to take him, he will carry you safely, avoiding the trees and underbrush. A good, strong kangaroo will give you a long chase, and very often the dogs cannot follow him. In this case, when the horseman gets up to the kangaroo, he takes off his stirrups and strap and knocks the animal over the head, which effectually stuns him. He is then killed and skinned. The hindquarters are given to the dogs. Yes, it is good enough eating, but too strong to be palatable to those of delicate taste. The tail, on the contrary, is considered by epicures to be delicious when made into soup.

The average size of a kangaroo is about four and a half feet high, but the "old man kangaroo" is often six feet high, and is very fierce when cornered, and is known to have ripped men open with a single blow from one of his hind legs.

Commander Schley has never been on the sick list since he entered the service, about twenty-five years ago.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

"Captain Joe," the local chief of the Washoe Indians, says that there is a squaw living in the outskirts of Carson, Nevada, who is nearly one hundred and fifty years old. Her grandson, at the age of thirty, was one of General Fremont's guides when he crossed the plains.

"Sometimes our misfortunes are blessings in disguise," as, for instance, the last flood which inundated Cincinnati so cleansed the city that it has been unusually healthful ever since. Most cities would be benefitted by a mild dose of the same medicine.

A professional gambler, says an Eastern paper, who has just returned from a Western tour reports that gambling is dying out in the West, few houses being open and the stakes so small that they are hardly worth playing for. Even on the Mississippi boats gambling is strictly prohibited. New Orleans, with its licensed tables, appears to be the gambler's only refuge. Possibly the traveler did not pause a night or two in Chicago.

A local paper of Dakota is responsible for the following: A Dakota farmer in 1881 planted a single grain of spring wheat and from it grew twenty-two stalks, each bearing a full head of wheat, yielding in all 860 grains of wheat; 760 of these were planted the next year, producing one-fifth of a bushel of splendid wheat. This was planted last spring, yielding seventeen bushels, making 1,020 pounds of wheat from one grain in three years.

The revision of the Old Testament, which it was hoped, would be out this year, will probably not make its appearance before early in 1885. The eighty-fifth and last session of the English revision committee has been held, but months must intervene before the complete work can be given to the public. Nothing is positively known of any changes made in the old version, the revisers on both sides of the Atlantic having kept their pledge of secrecy.

Benjamin Franklin left \$5,000 to Boston to be loaned in small sums to young married mechanics under 25 who had served an apprenticeship, had good character, and could give bonds for the repayment of the money in annual installments. The changed condition of mechanics, the decay of the apprentice system, and other causes have made the bequest of no value to those for whom it was intended under the rules Franklin laid down. The fund now amounts to more than \$290,000, and is increasing at the rate of \$10,000 a year.

A wonderful farm is that known as Baldwin's Santa Anita ranch, in Los Angeles county, California. It comprises 1,200 acres in grapes, 16,000 orange and lemon trees, 2,000 pomegranates, 3,000 English walnut trees, 2,000 almond trees, 2,500 peach trees, 4,000 pear trees, 2,000 apricot trees, 1,000 fig trees, and subsistence is furnished for 25,000 head of sheep, 2,000 cows and pigs and several hundred horses and mules, and this year before harvest could be seen 17,000 acres of golden grain.

A correspondent of the Illustrated London News says that the best soldiers in the world are not Englishmen, as an Englishman would naturally think, but Montenegrins and the men of Herzegovina. These mountaineers "are of stalwart proportions, heroic courage and marvelous military aptitude. They are without rivals anywhere in the world." Next, he says, come the Turks—"the private soldiers; brave, patient, hospitable, enduring," they "come second among the warriors of the world." After the Turks "undoubtedly come the English," though he admits he has not seen the German army in the field.

A curious claim pending in the pension office at Washington, belonging to the war of 1812, is one presented by the widow of Anthony Coslo, alias Anthony Castle. It cites that Anthony Castle, who died in 1870 at Ann Arbor, Mich., joined the British forces in Canada, that he deserted in 1814, crossed on the ice to the American side of the river and entered the United States service. After serving here six months he was retaken by the British at a point six miles below

Niagara Falls, court-martialed and sentenced to death. His sentence was, however, commuted to 800 lashes, from the result of which he never recovered, and for which a pension was granted him. This pension his widow asks to have increased.

The farmers will be interested in the fact that the agricultural interests will be largely represented at the Southern World's fair at New Orleans. The exposition has offered \$62,000 in premiums for cattle and dairy exhibits, \$10,000 being for the latter. Minnesota has added \$2,000 to the premium list for dairy products and apparatus. A number of herds of cows to supply milk will be exhibited, so as to allow of a practical showing of the working of the machinery. The commissioners, of Minnesota, are anxious to have the International dairy convention convene in New Orleans during January, and also to have the National Butter and Egg association meet there at the same time.

Reports from Odessa give a gloomy view of the ravages of the cattle plague in several Russian Provinces. The authorities are opposed by the people when any attempts are made to stamp out this pest. In Samara the plague is spreading rapidly and causing severe losses, but a Government Commission recently despatched to Nicolaievsk to investigate the disease and attempt to check it, were driven out by the peasantry and barely escaped with their lives. The peasants were willing to have their cattle cured, but when the Commission attempted to kill and bury the diseased stock, they were set upon by the women, armed with kitchen utensils and behind them came the men armed with spades, flails, scythes, and similar weapons. The Government offered to pay three roubles for each animal slaughtered, but as this was not the full value of a healthy animal, the peasantry would not submit to what they thought was insufficient compensation, and now the plague is spreading unchecked.

The London inner circle railroad is a marvelous feat of engineering skill. It runs throughout its entire distance under the busiest centre of the largest city in the world, and the operations attending the excavation and construction have proceeded without serious injury to or interruption of business or traffic. Quicksands have had to be passed through, beds of old rivers spanned, lofty warehouses and massive buildings secured while their foundation have been undermined, and an intricate network of gas and water pipes sustained until supports had been applied them from below. Added to this the six main sewers had several times to be reconstructed. Day and night the work has been carried on for eighteen months, and now the engineers are able to announce that their tunnel is complete. The laying of the rails and the building of the stations are the only portion of the immense work that remains to be done, and in a very short time trains will be passing over the whole of this wonderful subterranean road.

Freaks of Watches.

Watches are queer things. They possess some unaccountable peculiarities. For instance, some time about the beginning of last summer, when there had been a succession of fine displays of aurora borealis, it was estimated that in a single night in the City of New York the mainsprings of no less than 3,000 watches broke. This estimate is based on actual inquiries. Fine, sensitive watches are particularly liable to be affected by electrical atmospheric disturbances. During the months of June, July and August, when these phenomena are most frequent, there are more mainsprings broken than during all the remaining months of the year. They break in a variety of ways, sometimes snapping into as many as twenty-seven pieces. It is a fact that since the introduction of the electric light has become so general a large number of watches, some of them very fine ones, have become magnetized. While in this condition they are useless as timekeepers. This defect used to be incurable, and because of it thousands of watches have been thrown away after much money has been spent on them in vain attempts to persuade them to keep good time.

Co-operation in England.

It will probably surprise most people to be told that in England co-operation has made such headway as to induce a cautious journal like *The London Spectator* to predict "that long before the century is out the whole of our working class will be in association, and will have the staple trades of the country in their hands or under their control." Yet the statistics of the movement seem to show that such a prediction is not idle exaggeration. At present there are over 1,200 societies of working-folks, numbering 600,000 members. Almost all of them are heads of families, and they therefore represent two millions and a half of people, or one-twelfth of the whole population of the kingdom. These societies possess a capital of \$45,000,000, and make a net profit of \$10,000,000 yearly. Besides they have a Wholesale Society, now in its twentieth year, which on a capital of \$200,000 does a business of upward of \$15,000,000, with a net profit of \$160,000. This concern has branches and depots in Scotland, Ireland, this city, France and Denmark, and owns three large steamers which ply between England and the Continent on the company's business. And the constitution of this already great Union pledges it to "the promotion of the practice of truthfulness, justice and economy in production and exchange—(1) by the abolition of all false dealing, either direct or indirect; (2) by conciliating the conflicting interests of the capitalist, the worker, and the purchaser, through an equitable division among them of the fund commonly known as profits; (3) by preventing the waste of labor now caused by unregulated competition." No society is admitted to the Union unless it agrees to accept these principles as its guiding rules of business.

There is thus established a system which promises in good time to solve the most difficult economic problems of the age, and to find a common standing ground for Capital and Labor.—New York Tribune.

Thorns Held Sacred.

In Ulster, Ireland, the thorns are sacred; no plough approaches within some feet of them, and even to touch their branches is unlucky. Innumerable are the tales of fool-hardy persons who, after many warning, insisted on breaking off leaves or boughs from such trees, and who were punished by losing the guilty hand, or by its being so torn by the thorns as to be crippled for life. Sometimes a man alone at work in the fields would hear his own name distinctly called, and, looking up, would see all the little folk in green dancing on a hillside or playing among trees, and whilst he gazed they would all vanish again. They are in popular legends the very embodiment of caprice and fitful zeal for good or evil. For no apparent cause, some man or woman is suddenly singled out for every sort of favor; the ashes on the hearths are changed by night to glittering gold, the empty cars are filled with well-water by the *toil* of the tiny friends, the housework is done, and the barrel kept full of meal; and then on a sudden they forsake the favorite of a fortnight, and pelt him with petty woes till he is half wild, or, maybe, dry up the supply of milk, lame his horses, or blight his child. Their love of children, and their longing to carry them away, have suggested many touching ballads, and they are supposed to be willing to give any good gift to a household in return for leave to rock the cradle.

Emotions and Health.

Physicians make a mistake if they treat their patients with material remedies alone. There is a psychological element of cure. By agreeable emotions nervous currents are liberated, which stimulate the blood, brain and viscera. The emotions of persons are more important to health than most physicians suppose. Agreeable emotions are curative in their influence upon invalids, while disagreeable emotions often produce disease in persons of good health. A dyspeptic under the influence of depressing emotions cannot at his own table eat an ounce of food without subsequent distress; but at the table of a friend, under agreeable circumstances, he can eat a hearty meal without discomfort.—Health and Home.

Of the 4,500,000 dead letters handled in Washington last year, over 13,000 were mailed without any address, and over 200,000 without stamps.