

MILLIONS OF MUMMIES. The Marvelous Cave of Crocodiles That Surpasses the Tales of Fiction.

Dropping down the Nile, very late in the spring of 1863, our beach was becalmed off Maafolet, and the dragon man, badgered by two young Britons to find them sport, unwillingly named the pits of Maafolet. In the beginning of this century a certain Mr. Leigh, M. P., explored them with most disastrous results. His narrative may be found in a quaint old child's book, called "Winter Evenings," extracted doubtless from some record which I never came across. My recollections cannot be trusted to tell what happened to Mr. Leigh, precisely; but I know that one of his followers died in the cavern, another was lost, a third escaped after awful suffering, and finally they had to run the gauntlet of an infuriated population to the river side, whence the Pasha, or somebody, sent the prisoners to Cairo. On the whole, it was a very striking adventure, a special favorite in our nursery. So when the dragon men suggested in this casual way a visit to the crocodile pits of Maafolet, it seemed very strange and thrilling to my mind—though he had proposed a trip to fairyland by excursion train. We would follow the steps of the unfortunate member of parliament to the bitter end. Our dragon men became serious now. He urged that it was much too late in the day for starting, and we had to submit; doubtless the good man hoped that a wind would spring up in the night, but he was disappointed. Long before dawn on the morrow we set out, and in the afternoon we reached the spot.

The entrance of the pits is an oblong fissure in the middle of a small plateau among the mountains—that is, no other entrance was known in 1863. There are no facilities for descent; one may let one's self fall a matter of nine or ten feet, and clamber up again with the help of a donkey boy's cummerbund. I do not remember that the ugly possibilities of this situation struck us at all, but perhaps some measures had been taken to make sure that the boys did not reach one of them, indeed, headed the advance our dragon men had never been before. The Arab began by stripping completely, and he advised us to do the same. Then we lighted a candle each, and in a single file descended into the bowels of rock. At a few feet distant the passage narrowed rapidly until there was only room to crawl along on one's stomach. This first gallery may be some fifty yards long; it opens on a chamber spacious enough, but a natural cavern evidently. On the further side this another gallery as cramped as the last, headed like a furnace, reeking with foul air, vile stench of bats, and pungent fumes of bitumen. Then we understood why the Arab had stripped. This frightful passage may be 100 yards long, or the double of that or more—one is unused to measure distances crawling like a snake on one's stomach. At the end lies another chamber of good height, apparently, if the floor were cleared; but the whole area is blocked with enormous masses of stone piled as close as they will stand over which one has to clamber stooping. Here myriads of bats assail the explorer, blowing out his candle instantly, clinging to his hair and beard in ropes. A moment more and they vanish with a soft rustle of countless wings, such as I have heard in other climes when the sand grouse fly over head at dawn and at evening. On the opposite side of this vault the first trace of handiwork is observed—a square doorway. I myself, would have been quite satisfied to drop the track of Mr. Leigh's footsteps at this point. But as the dragon man was interested now—taking perhaps a professional pride in putting business through successfully. He could speak with the guide also. So we went on, still upon our stomachs, for an indefinite time, in an atmosphere beyond analysis and heat beyond example in the upper air. It was here, probably, that Mr. Leigh's party broke down, for I think they did not reach the end. We did after some hundreds of yards, as it seemed, slowly the passage heightened—one could get upon one's knees; and then the floor changed from the smooth granite to a soft, uneven compost. I lowered my candle to observe. We were crouching along over kneaded human forms.

A very strange spectacle, which seemed to us an embodied nightmare under the excitement of that awful journey. I think I was almost delirious. No scene seems to my memory now more fresh and striking than that black cave, with a slender glow of candle-light here and there, and the half-naked figures glistening with perspiration stretched out above a pavement of heads and limbs. Many of the faces had been gilt, and they shone flickering here and there upon the dusky mass. We could not get any explanation of the extraordinary mangling. The Arab said they had been so ever since he could recollect. It must be supposed that these were mummies of priests and attendants buried with sacred reptiles in their charge—great personages some of them evidently. Their families had been laid with them, for there were as many women, perhaps as men and a great many children. Everyone had been stripped and torn to pieces—all of those on the surface, at least, for a hurried examination failed to show how deep the serried pile of bodies lay. Mingled with them were sheets and strips of cloth, fragments of sarcophagi and quantities of women's hair on scalps—wigs possibly. On the other side of this vault is the hindermost battalions of the crocodile host—immense. Standing on the human pavement there is just space enough above and in front to observe the manner of their disposal, for the topmost layer has been pulled down. If it were not certain for other reasons that the present entrance is not that formerly used, the arrangement of those crocodile mummies would prove it. They filled the space completely from floor to arch and from side to side, until the upper ones were removed—nearly aligned, tail to head, head to tail, with palm leaves laid between and the inter-

WONDERS OF THE SUN.

The Destruction of the Earth Nothing to a Storm on the Sun.

Some highly interesting facts can be extracted from the statistics of solar phenomena in 1888, which are now making their appearance in various scientific periodicals. If any one who has an astronomer among his friends had been invited to look at the sun with a telescope in 1882, 1883 or 1884, and should look at it with the instrument again to day, he would be surprised at the change in its aspect. Then hardly a day passed on which the face of the sun might not be splashed with spots, which not infrequently attained enormous dimensions, being many thousands of miles across and surrounded by vast areas of disturbance, over which the solar surface was broken and heaped up into those shifting mountains of fire called faculae. Now we look in vain for any such display. Except at rare intervals the great orb of day looks as smooth as a mirror. Faculae are visible under favorable circumstances, but by no means as extensive as those of half a dozen years ago; and the observer may watch for a week without perceiving a dark spot anywhere. Such spots as make their appearance are invariably inconspicuous and exhibit no evidence of extensive and violent disturbance. The change simply means that a few years ago one of the regular and average intervals of eleven years, was attained, and now the succeeding minimum has arrived. There is something overwhelmingly impressive in the display of physical forces on a scale of such magnitude as these variations in the condition of the sun suggest. The destruction of our globe, which is the most stupendous event that the mind is wont to conceive, would be a phenomenon of no great moment in comparison with the tremendous variations going on in the sun. Yet ordinarily we become aware of these solar activities only by watching their effects with a telescope. And what we see are simply surface phenomena. The imagination alone can penetrate into the terrible center of the solar globe and behold the struggle of imprisoned elements, whose atoms, whirled and ground together at the very axle of the solar system, as yet forced asunder by the mad vibrations of a degree of heat that would dissipate the solid earth in a whiff of vapor. There are all the substances of which the earth is made, sufficient in quantity to form hundreds of thousands of such globes as ours, jumbled in a wonderful mass, that is at once gaseous through the fury of heat, and viscid through the giant grip of gravitation, which there at its very seat and center, contends for the mastery with molecular forces that roused to fiercer energy by its oppression, battle and confound its utmost efforts. How should we recognize that noble metal iron in the sun reduced from all its pride of strength to vapor, and perhaps with its very molecules retentive asunder?

Yet, confusing as is the picture which one gets of the war of forces and the chaos of matter in the sun, recent observations have made it clear that there is a certain fundamental organization there running into details that are highly suggestive, though difficult of interpretation. In the first place, the periodicity of the sun-spot phenomena is, in itself, an evidence that the solar globe possesses a systematic structure, going much further than the simple surface division into phosphoric and chromospheric. The mere fact of its rotation must, of course, produce some shaping effect upon it, but the sun-spots exhibit appearances not accounted for by any resultant of rotational motion. For instance whenever a minimum sun-spot period has passed, and the spots begin to appear again, they start in comparatively high latitudes, and then as the maximum approaches the belts on either side of the equator in which the spots make their appearance, seem to draw slowly together, approaching from north and south, while the spots as they break out assume greater dimensions and exhibit more violent activity. At last the maximum being passed, they begin to diminish both in number and size, but the spot-belts still approach the equator, and the few small spots that are seen during a minimum usually lie within a few degrees of that line.

The other phenomenon that we have mentioned, that of recurrent outbreaks in certain longitudes, might be interpreted as showing that there are regions upon the sun peculiarly liable to such disturbances. If sun-spots could be regarded as re-sensitized volcanic phenomena, these regions would appear to correspond to those parts of the earth like the East Indies and the Hawaiian Islands, where volcanoes are most numerous and mightiest. But with our present information concerning the constitution of the solar globe it would be difficult to admit the possibility of such an explanation. The only effect that these stupendous solar phenomena are known to have upon the earth, is as we have already stated, of a magnetic or electric character. The theories of their influence upon the weather may have a basis of truth, but have not been demonstrated. Before they can be thoroughly tested it will be necessary to obtain records of observations made simultaneously in many parts of the globe upon some concerted plan and capable of careful and accurate comparison. That there is some powerful influence affecting the atmosphere, the law of whose action remains to be discovered, is quite clear from the unusual factory condition of the science of meteorology, and it is possible that a more systematic study than has yet been undertaken of the terrestrial effect of changes in the sun may throw light upon some of the mysteries of the seasons.—New York Sun.

Missed Talent. In the state of New Jersey a public inquiry was recently held into alleged adulterations of food, and the report presented by the committee is remarkable. They had caused 623 separate articles of food offered for sale to be analyzed and of these they found only 320 to be pure. Among the pure commodities were those peculiarly American products, "canned goods" and only one specimen of this was found to be other than it professed to be. But when the "canned goods" were deducted from the list the result was even less favorable to transatlantic honesty, for of the remaining articles only 46.83 per cent. were found to be pure, while 53.17 per cent. were adulterated.

The First Express Package.

The first express package carrier was rather a consumptive-looking young man of the name of Harnden (his given name has escaped my memory), who in 1836 instituted the business in New York City by calling on bankers, brokers and merchants with a carpet-bag and soliciting the carrying of money and other valuable packages between that city and Boston. Like all new undertakings, it was not long before a competitor appeared in the person of Alvah Adams, who selected Philadelphia as his objective point, and who adopted the same tactics as Harnden. James Hoey, who is now a prominent figure in the Adams Express company, and a reputed millionaire, was at that time a young Irish boy employed to sweep out a 10x15 office on William street, west side, between Wall and Pine, and to deliver and call for packages which became too large for the carpet-bag.

The business grew rapidly, the trunk took the place of the carpet-bag, succeeded by iron-bound crates strongly padded, which had to give way to box cars on truck wheels, for the convenience of transfer from the New York and Providence line of steamboats to the Boston and Providence railroad. Harnden continued the eastern route and Adams the southern. Later on a consolidation took place under the present title and Harnden's Express was merged into the Adams Express company.

Playing Cards of Human Skin.

Captain E. W. Kingsbury of this city is at home for a short stay from the San Carlos Indian reservation, where he is a post trader. The San Carlos reservation is a valley 100 miles square, situated at the junction of the San Carlos and Gila rivers in Arizona. About 5,000 Indians are cared for by the government on this reservation. As soon as poor Lo gets his hands on a week's provisions or extra blanket he sits down on the ground and proceeds to gamble them away. "By the way," said Captain Kingsbury, "did you ever see their playing cards?" and with the remark he handed out a deck which he said had been made by the Indians. The faces and spots were copied after the Mexican monte playing cards and were put on with some bright, durable paint. They looked as if made of mica or possibly thin bone, but Captain Kingsbury, being asked as to the material, said: "Well, you know the Indian makes everything, durable, and you know what a varied use he makes of rawhide." The listener, who had been gracefully shuffling the cards, suddenly held them between thumb and finger. "Now you see," continued Captain Kingsbury, "a horse hide or a beef hide would be too thick, and it is reported that such things are manufactured from the exterior covering of prisoners, in other words, manufactured from men's skins."—Kansas City Times.

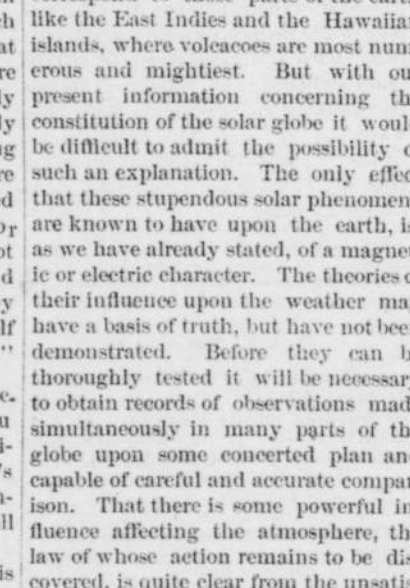
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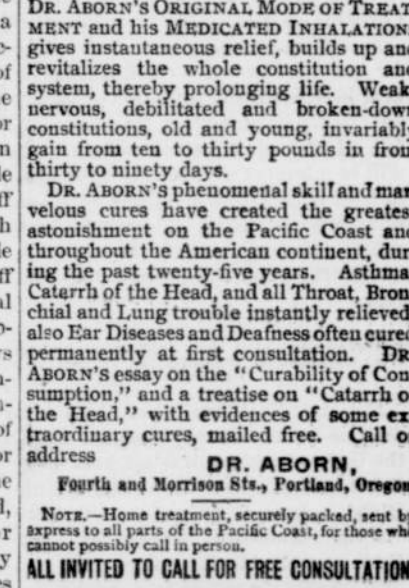
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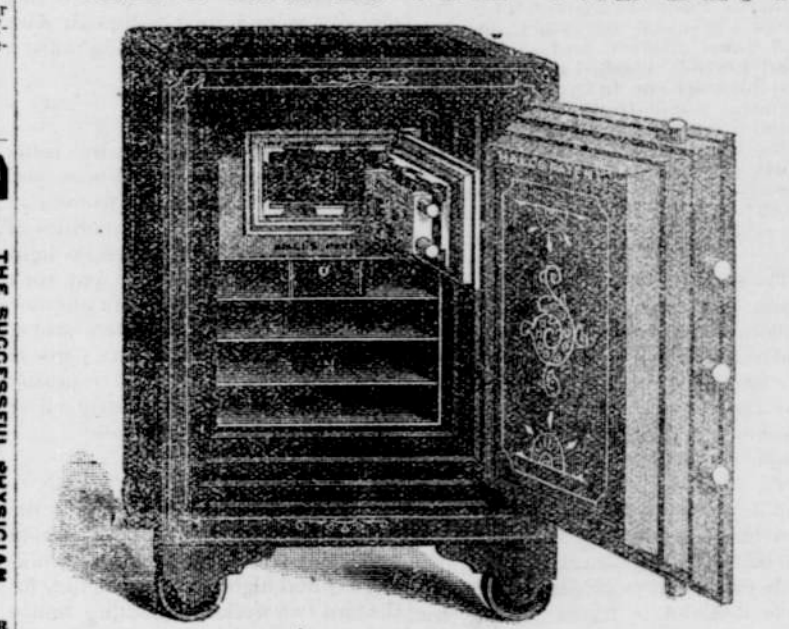
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HALL'S STANDARD SAFES Never Fail to Protect their Contents against Both Fire and Burglary. HALL'S SAFE AND LOCK COMPANY.

UNION PACIFIC TICKETS ON SALE TO DENVER. Omaha, Kansas City, Chicago, ST. PAUL, ST. LOUIS, AND ALL POINTS East, North & South. PORTLAND, OR., GEO. S. TAYLOR Ticket Agt., Corner First and Oak Sts.

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