

The
GEO. S. PARKER
FOUNTAIN
PEN.

A QUESTION.

Wild blew the wind and shook the house,
The child lay trembling in his bed,
And listened like a wainscot mouse
While the blast roared on overhead.

Around the gables how it sung,
Dashed the fierce snow-sleet on the pane;
Far out to sea its great voice flung
And ploughed the wood, and ploughed the main.

But when the blue morning heavens smiled,
And shining lay the quiet snow,
"The wind has gone! But," cried the child,
"Where is it when it doesn't blow?"

Harriet Prescott Spofford, in an Exchange.

TOO MUCH ALIKE.

The close of the year 1886 found me steering officer on board of the United States ship "Albatross," commanded by Captain S., and lying in the harbour of San Francisco, bound on a cruise in search of the Confederate steamer Shenandoah, which was at that time burning American whalers in the Okhotsk Sea.

While recuperating after our long voyage around the Horn the younger officers of the ship were wont to make frequent visits to the shore. Cards and billiards were our usual amusements, and in following these pastimes we sometimes found ourselves in queer places and often in dangerous localities; for Frisco was not the place then that it is to-day. In those days the city was infested with some of the worst characters and rascals that ever existed. Upon the night in question all agreed to go in uniform, and as brass buttons and shoulder straps were the predominating feature in our uniform in those days, it was difficult for the landsman to distinguish between the dress of the steersman and that of the wardroom officers.

Sometime during our perambulations on shore I found myself separated from my companions, and after walking about for some time I chanced opposite the "Palace Saloon"—one of the most magnificent but most lawless places which then abounded in the city. Being all ready for almost any adventure I strolled in and called for a bottle of wine; being pretty well supplied with money I was not long in picking up acquaintances. I was eventually invited to take a hand in a game of billiards and soon became absorbed in its fascinations.

The room was well filled with a cosmopolitan crowd. While waiting for my opponent to make his "run" I noticed a group whose appearance marked them as belonging to the gambling fraternity fixing their glances upon me, and now and then engaging in a whispered conversation. The game being finished a trio of the group approached me, and smiling blandly invited me to join them in a cigar and a chat over a glass. I readily assented, and we adjourned to an inner room which was elaborately furnished. The trio sat directly opposite me. Happening to cast my eyes in their direction I detected a hasty glance pass between them, and immediately one of the trio arose, passed out of the room and closed the door. At the same time I heard the peculiar click of a lock and like a flash it dawned upon me that I was a prisoner.

Rising to my feet I demanded an explanation of such conduct, but received in return a malicious sneer. One of my companions without a word drew from his breast a murderous-looking dagger. I saw at once that murder was contemplated, and springing into a corner of the room prepared to sell my life as dearly as possible.

My only weapon was a small clasp knife which I usually carried about my person. Placing my thumb upon the clasp in order to prevent the blade from closing on my hand and thereby disabling me, I awaited the onslaught which I was convinced would soon come. My two assailants withdrew to a corner of the room; there one of them taking from his pocket something which looked like straws or matches, they proceeded to draw lots.

Presently I noticed the smaller one of the two suddenly turned pale. Reaching out his hand he received the dagger from his companion and deliberately proceeded to measure off about five inches on his blade. He slowly approached me and I felt that the critical moment had arrived. I fixed my eyes upon those of the assassin as he slowly approached me, and upon meeting my gaze he seemed baffled for the moment and he paused as his eyes rested upon the knife which I held in my hand. He did not seem to know the exact nature of the weapon, so he retreated a few steps.

The man's companion, seeing him hesitate, made an effort to urge him on; but to no purpose, and finally they both withdrew to the further side of the room and again held a hurried conversation. Turning towards me again the one with the dagger lay down on the floor, in order to be below the range of my weapon, and working himself towards me prepared to strike; poising himself upon his right arm and foot, with the dagger in his left hand he made a fearful lunge toward me; the blow fell short of its mark.

I assumed the offensive. Throwing the whole weight of my body forward upon my left foot, I lunged forward, but missed my opponent owing to his low position on the floor. Seeing that I was about to force the fight my opponent lost courage and began to sob and cry like a child, and refused to renew the attack, although urged on repeatedly by his companion. While this was going on the suspense to me was terrible; I dared not force the fight, as it was two to one, and I knew that if I left my corner it was sure death.

Losing patience the other assassin seized the dagger from the hand of his companion and prepared to renew the attack. At this moment the door was unlocked and opened, a stranger rushed into the room, and seizing the hand that held the dagger exclaimed: "You fools, this is not our man!"

The would-be assassins immediately fled, and turning to me the stranger cautioned me to leave the place as quickly as possible. I did not stand upon the order of going, but found my way out upon the street in quick time. Passing down the street I ran upon an old friend, Detective Allen. Upon seeing me he exclaimed: "What is the matter—you look as if you had seen a ghost!" I related to him as briefly as possible my adventure, and he assured me that I was lucky to escape with my life, as I had been in the most dangerous place in Frisco.

I spent the rest of the night with my friend Allen and early the next morning went on board. The same day we left for the Okhotsk Sea, and on returning some two months later we were surprised to hear that Lieutenant Marshall, United States Navy, had been foully murdered and found lying near the "Palace Saloon." Great excitement prevailed in naval circles because of his death, and the most strenuous efforts were made to discover his murderers, but they were of no avail. The excitement soon died out, and shortly after our ship was put out of commission and her officers and crew ordered East.

Upon arriving at New York I was ordered to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. I was one day strolling about the ancient city when I observed an elderly gentleman approaching me. Extending his hand he greeted me cordially, exclaiming, "Well, Lieutenant Marshall, how are you, when did you arrive?" Before I could offer any explanation his arm was drawn within mine, and before I knew it I was at his doorstep. I immediately informed him that he was mistaken, as my name was Mate M., United States Navy. He could hardly be convinced, and would not accept my explanation until he had called one of his daughters, with whom the lieutenant was intimately acquainted. The moment she saw me her woman's wit detected the mistake; but they all declared that they never saw two persons who so clearly resembled each other. The circumstances of that eventful night in San Francisco came vividly before me again, and after pondering awhile the whole mystery was solved.

It seemed that Lieutenant Marshall had given offence to some of these worthies who frequented the gambling saloons, and they had sworn to take his life at the first opportunity. The resemblance between myself and their intended victim had indeed nearly cost me my life.

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Suspended Animation.

Cases of suspended animation followed by fearful consequences to the apparently deceased are unfortunately reported from time to time, and the others . . . Two instances of hasty burial have recently occurred, one in France, the other in Turkey, which excited naturally considerable emotion, and have attracted public attention to the necessity of acquiring in every case absolute proof of death before committing the body to its last resting-place; and it cannot be said that the request is too exigent! It is not to-day only, however, that this question has occupied the public mind, for Pliny signalled the danger of premature inhumation, and in the last century Bruhier d'Abincourt, in France (1742), and Hufeland, in Germany (1791), called attention to the uncertainty of the signs of death, striking terror into the minds of the public. This terror was naturally much exaggerated, and terrible stories were told on the subject. Nevertheless, the fact remains that people have been accidentally buried alive, especially in the warmer climates.

One of the most celebrated cases of apparent death was that of Vittorina Laforcade, and which was followed by judicial proceedings. This woman was in love with a young man of her village, Emillo Bassuet, and wanted to marry him; but Bassuet being poor, her family would not hear of it, and some time afterwards she was married to a rich banker (1808). Two years afterwards she died, but a few days previously she expressed a wish to be interred in her native village. The request was complied with. Emillo Bassuet, hearing of her death, desired to have a look at her whom he had not ceased to love, and, aided by the grave-digger, he got access to the vault a few hours after she had been laid there. To his great surprise, he heard groans coming from the coffin, and breaking open the lid he beheld Vittorine with her eyes widely staring, her hands clenched, and bosom heaving convulsively. The air revived her, but she immediately fell into a swoon, and in this condition was carried by the two men to the house of her lover, where she was cared for so tenderly that she recovered. They married, and, thinking it was wise to leave the country, they emigrated to America, where they remained twenty years. At the end of that time home-sickness took possession of them, and, being certain that they would no longer be recognised, they returned to France. However, the banker came across them, and recognised to his great astonishment his former wife. The latter did not conceal her identity, but refused to return to him. The banker took an action against Bassuet to recover his property, and the case was tried in Paris courts. The tribunal nonsuited him. The story savours very much of a romance, but the facts are true.

Provoking suspended animation is not a common profession in Europe, but in India it is otherwise. Fakirs have the habit at certain moments of making believe that they are dead; they are buried for a certain time prescribed by themselves. In a report made by Kuhn to the Anthropological Society of Monaco, two cases of the kind are cited: a fakir sojourned alive six weeks in the ground; another ten days only. An India book with the harmonious title "Hathayoga" gives the rules for these strange practices. To paralyse the respiratory function, haschish is mixed with other vegetables in certain proportions, and utilised in such a manner as would seem to act as a substitute for the absence of air and food. Colonel Shervington gives one or two instances of fakirs being forgotten in their voluntary grave!

In Europe, heretofore, cases of premature inhumation were not infrequent, but today, more attention being paid to the matter, and the signs of death being better known, such terrible accidents would be thought impossible, especially in countries like England, Germany, and Russia, where the body must be kept three clear days. In France on the contrary, burial is permitted at the end of twenty-four hours, but generally does not take place until the third day.—Medical Press.

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Proverted Tendencies.

Whatever else he may be, man is a member of the animal kingdom. This fact is obtrusive through his life. The growth of the intellect and all that seems to us above the intellectual cannot obscure the persistence of the animal. The poet may urge us to "Work out the beast and let the ape and tiger die." But the "working out" can be but relative. To "work out the beast" would be to extinguish the human race. Essential to the continuance of man upon earth, the instincts through which the race continues seem, as might be expected, little touched by the progress of culture. Through almost every warp and weft of the vast texture the red line runs, now dim, now bright, but often denominated every other colour. Associated as it is with much that we deem highest, it may bring the high and low into the closest proximity. The sense of form and colour seem to be worked thoroughly the animal world in the sexual selection by which so much of that which is beautiful is preserved and is increased. With the development of man comes a higher, wider, more intense and varied sense of beauty, but still subordinated in its chief intensity to the same instinct, not always consciously perhaps; but the intellectual development of man has destroyed the pristine balance between the varied functions of the body, and civilisation, with its artificial conditions of existence, has furnished a field for the growth of perverted tendencies.

All unperceived may be the tendencies which only come to light when the years bring into full influence the instincts on which the continuance of the race depends. These instincts themselves may also be the subjects of a morbid tendency, under which they acquire an unnatural character. These unhappy victims of perverted instinct are most sincerely to be pitied, not less for that which is theirs by innate constitution, but also for that which they bring on themselves. They cannot perhaps perceive the need, or produce the power of will, which alone can suppress the manifestation of the abnormal tendencies. But pity cannot obscure the compulsory necessity there is to free society from their presence. There are always others who, without definite perversion, have yet the want of balance which makes perversion easy. The great need is to make their influence for ever impossible. As the law stands, this is not done; and the wisdom of that which is done is open to some doubt. Penal servitude for a brief time, and then release upon the world, does little for the individual, and almost nothing for the society which the law exists to save. It simply lowers the social stratum on which the pernicious influence is exerted.—British Medical Journal.

Justice.

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A pupil in an English board-school recently wrote the following composition on Sir Walter Raleigh: "Sir Walter Raleigh was a very great man. He went over and discovered America; and when he had discovered America he discovered Virginia. He discovered the potato. And when he had discovered the potato he discovered tobacco. And when he had discovered tobacco, he turned to his companions and said, 'My friends, be of good cheer, for we have this day in England lit such such a flame as I trust by God's grace shall never be extinguished.'"—Tribune.

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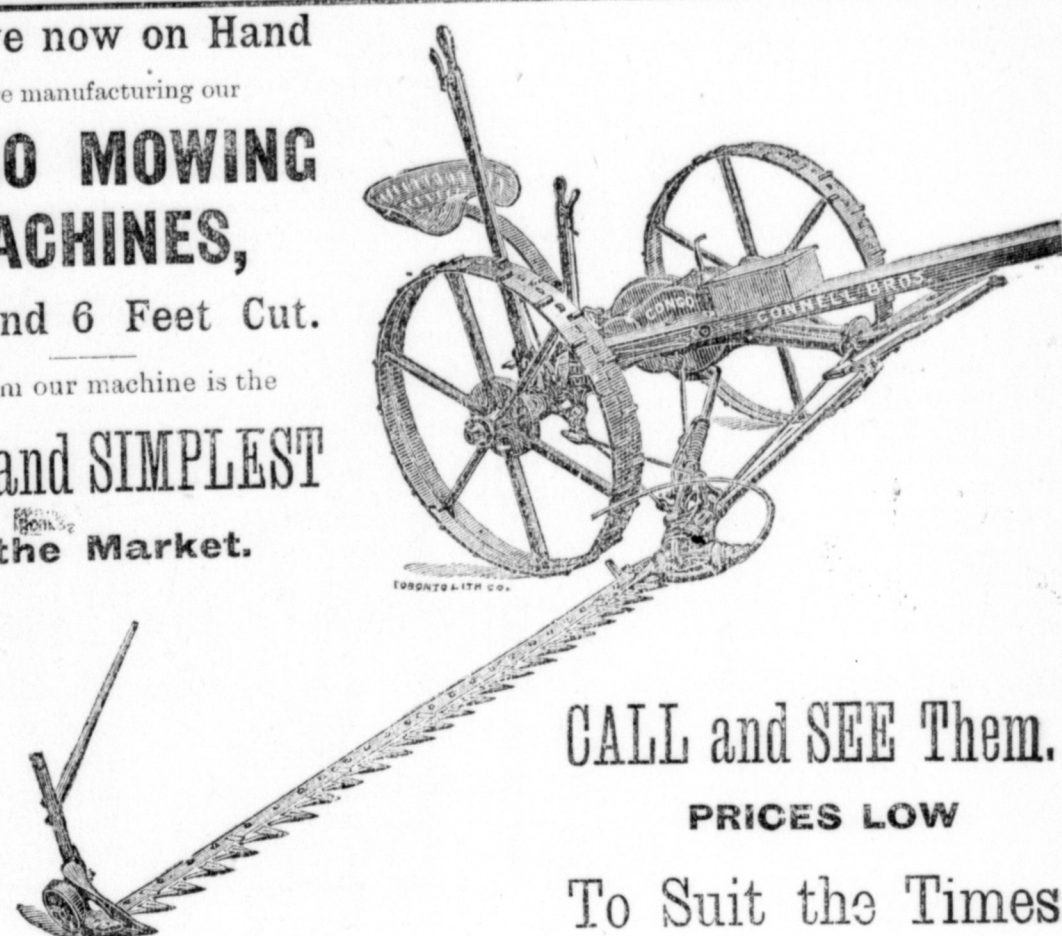
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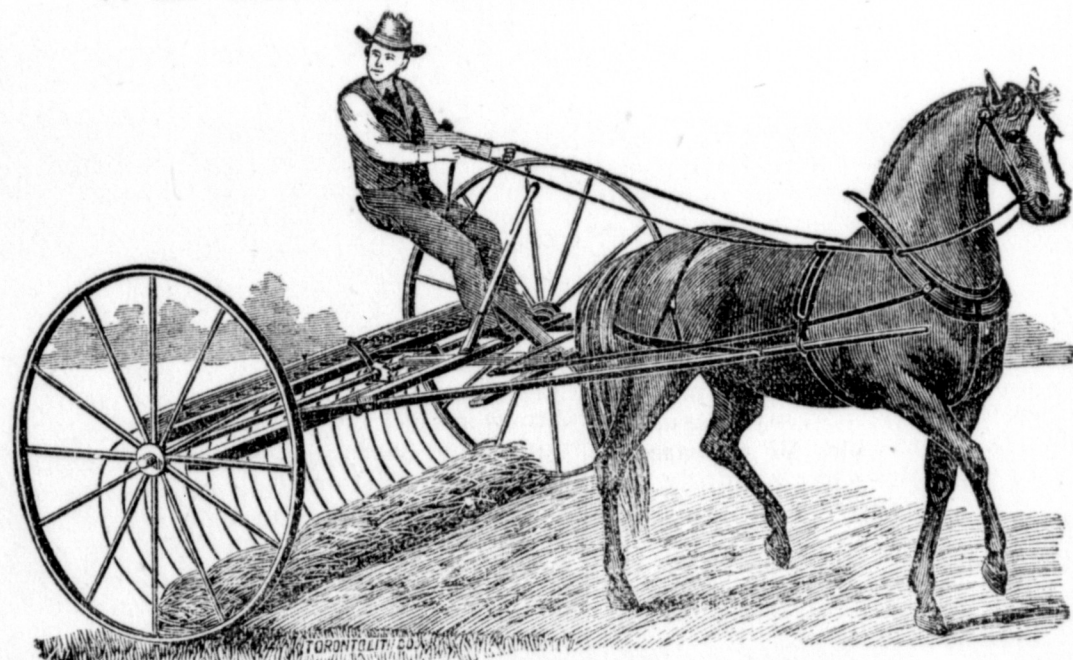


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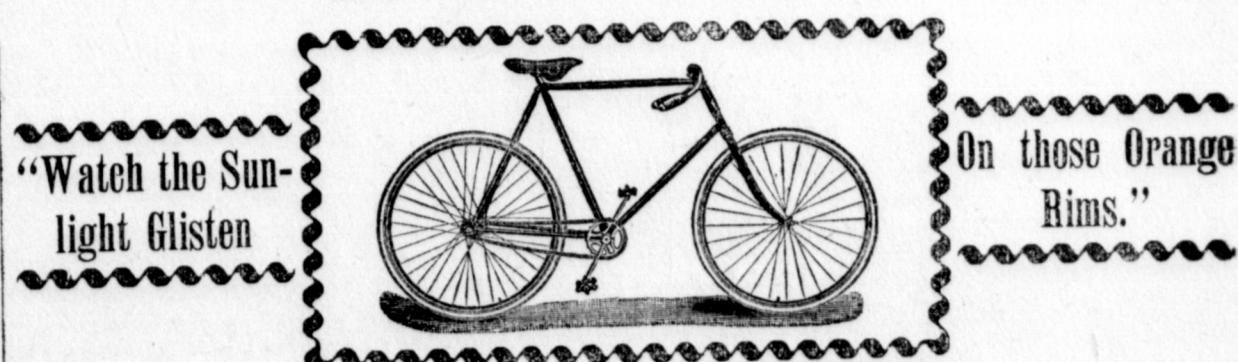
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