A ROOF EPISODE

Have you never read of a person's hair turning gray in a single night? Of course you have. The old story books are full of such tales. I can remember dozens of them—stories reeking with gore and dank with dungeons and grewsome with ghosts and other uncanny things.

We were on the roof of the cathedral at Milan. We had climbed the stairs in the late afternoon of a beautiful spring day after paying the custodian the insignificant price he asked for all the glories visible from the elevated station. We had looked through the telescope for another fee and had each assured the others that we saw Mont Blanc perfectly well without for a moment believing what the others said or convincing them that we told the truth and had ended our climbs by ascending to the highest point under the lantern, if it is a lantern, by the corkscrew staircase, which will scarcely permit any but the thinnest persons to pass when one is going up and the other coming down.

We were a party of four, and when the roof was reached the youngest proposed a ramble over that portion of the structure. To this all but myself assented. I was tired and proposed to rest awhile at the foot of the tower stairs, where the others were to pick me up on their return, so that we might all descend together. This was satisfactory, and off they started.

For a time I was quite comfortable and paid no attention to the passage of time, but I suddenly noticed that it was getting dark and that my companions had not returned. I called to them first in a moderate tone of voice, then more loudly, but received no answer.

Fearing that they would be belated on the roof, I started in search of them. I walked the entire length of the ridge of the main roof and peered down all the side passages in the gathering dusk, but caught no glimpse of my companions. Then I descended to the roof of the aisle and made a search there, which was also fruitless. I became alarmed as the light failed and ran from one point to another, calling out as I ran, until I found, to my great distress, that I had lost my way. I could see far below me the lights of the great city and hear the distant rumbling of the carriages as they drove past on the stony streets.

But I was as effectually lost for the moment as if I had been in the heart of an African jungle without a compass and no Stanley on the alert to hunt me up. In the excitement and despair which the consciousness of this fact produced I rushed about so wildly that I slipped and fell on a long flight of stone steps, wet with the dew which had begun to fall. I was not conscious of any serious injury from the fall, but when I brought up at the foot of the stairs and tried to regain my footing I found, to my despair and horror, that I was utterly unable to move my limbs. I was paralyzed.

The mental agony I suffered is inconceivable. Yet, curiously enough, I spent the first moments in speculating as to the exact nature of the injury I had sustained. Had I broken my back or simply injured my spinal cord? I tried to recall what I had heard my doctor friends say about injuries of a similar character, but could not seem to remember anything definite. The words, "the fifth pair," flashed into my mind and appeared to connect themselves in some way with my condition, but whether it was the fifth pair of nerves or ribs or of something else I could not make out.

I could not understand either how I could have been so seriously injured without any sensible shock, but that my power of locomotion was gone there was no doubt. I could move my hands, and I began to speculate on the number of things one could do with one's hands alone. This occupied me for what seemed to be an hour, but as the train of thought was interrupted by a clock striking the hour of midnight I concluded it must have been much longer and wondered I had not heard the preceding hours.

Suddenly the full horror of my condition flashed upon me. I was not only doomed to remain where I was, helpless and alone, during the long, chilly hours of the night, but there was no certainty that I would ever get away alive. My friends would never dream that I was there. They had undoubtedly concluded that I had gone down, and if they missed me would search everywhere but in the right place. It might be days before the particular spot in which I lay would be visited, and in that case it would be too late. Starvation would do for me even if the injury I had received did not. In my anguish I shrieked aloud, but [illegible] fully conscious all the time that nobody could hear me. Visitors and custodians alike must have departed hours before, and even if my cries were heard from the streets below nobody would attribute them to their real source.

To the feeling of acute anguish succeeded one of blank despair. I no longer speculated on the possibility of being discovered, dead or alive. There was a dull, leaden feeling at my chest, and I found myself repeating mechanically old rhymes and jingles and saying the alphabet backward, as I once learned to do in seeking relief from insomnia. Yet at the same time I was conscious that my whole life was passing in review before me, as they say it does when one is drowning or being hanged. I remembered that saying, too, and without any cessation of the review I wondered in my doubled consciousness if I were undergoing the sensations of a drowning man or of one being hanged and wished I could put them down on paper for the benefit of the rest of mankind.

What struck me as singular was that the clocks kept on striking 12. The second time they did this I thought I must have lost consciousness for an entire day and that this was the second midnight. But when the third stroke of 12 came from half a dozen clocks I knew it could not be [illegible] days since I had fallen.

I thought first that I had become demented, and then it occurred to me that if I were I could not reason about it in that fashion, so the clocks themselves must be crazy. This theory satisfied me until the striking began again, when I went off in another fantastic speculation. My friends had discovered that I was missing and were having the bells rung to keep my spirits up.

Oh, the long, long, weary hours I spent in waiting for a glimpse of daylight! I had no hope that daylight would bring me any relief, but the prospect of staying where it was endless midnight seemed unendurable. I groaned and wept and dug my nails into the palms of my hands until it seemed as if the blood would come, but I did not even feel any sense of pain.

It must have been after the clocks had struck midnight a dozen times or more—I kept no exact account—that I saw in the distance at what seemed to be the farther end of the cathedral roof two faint glimmers of light. Presently there were two more and then two more, until there was a regular procession of them. I tried to shout, but had become so weak with cold and suffering that I could not raise my voice above a whisper.

The lights nevertheless approached, growing gradually stronger, until I could see that they were borne by several black robed figures that were marching beside a coffin. As the procession moved slowly toward me I began to wonder what it meant and whether funerals took place at midnight on the roof of Milan cathedral. Then I speculated a moment on the propriety of disturbing the obsequies even in my extreme need. Suddenly it dawned upon me that this was my own funeral, and I knew that I was either dead or had gone mad. In the supreme anguish of this discovery all memory of past suffering was blotted out, and I entered on a new period of the most exquisite torture. Fortunately it was of brief duration. As the foremost of the moving figures reached me I felt a grasp on my arm, and a voice called in my ear:

"Wake up, father. It's time to be going down. I guess you must have had your yoke turned."

It was my daughter, and beside her were the rest of the party, flushed with their ramble on the roof. I straightened out my cramped limbs, which must have gone to sleep about the time I did, and pulled out my watch. I had been there just fifteen minutes.

I don't mean to be understood that my hair really did turn gray in that night of horror on Milan cathedral. In the first place, there is not much of it, and what there is has been tolerably gray for some years. But I do mean to say that I am not incredulous as to the possibility of such a capillary change as the story books tell about.

Volcanoes In North America.

In our North American possessions are volcanoes to spare. There are fifteen active craters in Alaska and a score more in repose which may at any time break forth. The Alaska volcanoes have been active during all the time the country has been known to civilized man. In 1796 an island was formed thirty miles north of Unalaska by volcanic action. Eight years later when revisited the soil was still warm. This island has gradually been increasing in size, probably by upheaval of land. Just across Bering strait another volcano in Kamchatka, 15,000 feet in height, erupted in 1829 with a noise that was heard for fifty miles. One of the volcanoes in Cook inlet is 14,000 feet high.—Era.

RHEUMATISM.

The Despair and Reproach of the Medical Profession.

It was by rheumatic twinges in his joints that Adam was able to forecast foul weather, and it was rheumatism which tortured Noah during the damp days of the deluge. Old as this malady is known to be, it still remains the same stupendous and baffling mystery and the same despair and reproach of the medical profession. Now, as before the Christian era, its treatment is empirical and its prognosis blind guesswork. Of all the manifold afflictions which restrain the natural gayety of mankind this elusive disease is the least about which the doctors have any right to dogmatize. Their proper attitude toward rheumatism is one of humility and awe. However, with arrogance which approaches shameless effrontery, they have recently affirmed that it is contagious; that a person of the most blameless life may acquire its seeds by consorting with a rheumatic friend or neighbor under favoring circumstances. It may be so; but, considering their appalling ignorance of its [illegible] and its nature and [illegible] involves, they [illegible] for any such [illegible].

[illegible] rheumatic [illegible] hope of [illegible] the victim of the [illegible] ready [illegible] a [illegible] without his being [illegible] as a [illegible] of physical [illegible]. Pugnacity, irritability and sometimes even profanity are characteristic of acute rheumatism. The moral descent of a good man in the throes of this ailment is as pathetic as it is deplorable, so piteous indeed, that considerate friends who are expert at dodging often leave harmless missiles within his reach that he may vary the monotony of pain with the pleasure of personal assault. To proclaim that rheumatism is contagious is to drive from the presence of the victim all sympathetic friends and condemn him to the exclusive care of the hardened professional nurse.—New York Times.

Recipe For Happiness.

One of the youngest looking women we have ever known was one whose principle in life was never to expect too much of people, and in this lies the great secret of happiness. A large amount of worry and trouble comes from our too great expectations of people. We expect too much of our children, for example. They must be gifted, beautiful, obedient little compendiums of all the virtues, and if they are not all this we think bitter things and sow wrinkles and gray hair and ill health for ourselves, says Woman's Life. What right have we to expect so much of our own children? Blessed is the parent who looks tolerantly and philosophically on the faults of his children and who realizes that he has no right to expect too much of children as long as the law of heredity holds good. Unless we ourselves are gifted, beautiful and obedient to the will of somebody else we have no right to expect such perfections of our children.

Treatment For Burns.

For a dry burn there is nothing better than equal parts of linseed oil and limewater. This makes the carron oil, which the Welsh miners use in case of burns. It should have a place in every closet where household remedies are kept. In applying it shake the bottle, saturate a soft cloth with the mixture and lay over the burn. Then cover closely with cotton batting or flannel to keep out every bit of air and secure the whole with a light bandage. Burns may also be treated by covering with a thick layer or any bland oil like vaselin, sweet oil, linseed oil, castor oil, butter, lard, cocoanut oil, cocoa butter, cold cream or almost any fat that is not rancid. Glycerin should not be used. It is too irritating. Soft powders like flour, laundry or cornstarch may also be dusted on thickly, then bound on.

They All Looked.

Dear little Molly was wearing new boots, and no one had admired them, at which she was terribly disappointed. At last a brilliant idea struck her, and when there was a pause in the conversation she exclaimed:

"How many feet are there among us all?"

This had the desired effect, much to her delight.—Home Chat.

Beards In Alaska.

Mustaches are not worn by men exposed to the severity of an Alaskan winter. They wear full beards to protect the throat and face, but keep the upper lip clean shaven. The moisture from the breath congeals so quickly that a mustache becomes imbedded in a solid cake of ice, and the face is frozen in a short time.

AN ODD COLLECTION.

Why a Book Lover Buys Old Bibles and Hymnbooks.

"All book collectors have their weaknesses," remarked a man who is often seen poring over the sidewalk counters of secondhand bookshops, "and mine, I confess, runs in the line of old Bibles and hymnbooks. Not particularly because they are Bibles and hymnbooks, but because I simply can't stand it to see such books tossed about as dusty, almost worthless secondhand goods. Except in the case of rare old Bibles or quite ancient hymnbooks, such books cost but a trifle. Religious books, as a rule, are almost unsalable in secondhand shops, and I buy a great many, only, however, such as contain family names and inscriptions of pathetic character.

"My first purchase of the kind was an Episcopal prayer book, battered and torn, with the name of an old friend of mine in gilt on the cover. It gave me a shock to find it on a secondhand counter, so I paid the required dime and carried it home. The man is dead, and his children are living in other cities, well to do. I have no idea how his prayer book became public property. People are queer. I offered it to a remote relative of the former owner, but she said she didn't care about it. Since then I have bought in other old family Bibles and hymnbooks which belonged to people I had known or which contain interesting written matter. It is pitiful to see a Bible inscribed, 'To my dear son Henry, from his devoted mother,' or, 'Elizabeth, from a loving father,' or, 'Little William's birthday gift to Uncle William.'

"When these books come into my hands, I erase or tear out the inscriptions, and if my shelf of old Bibles and hymnbooks ever gets started out again as 'religious junk' it will all be anonymous and wanting in that distressing quality which has made me perhaps absurdly sentimental over it."—Detroit Free Press.

Argument From Precedent.

Lincoln was once arguing a case against an opponent who tried to convince the jury that precedent is superior to law and that custom makes things legal in all cases. Lincoln's reply, given in Miss Ida Tarbell's life of the great war president, was one of his many effective analogies in the form of a story.

Lincoln told the jury that he would argue the case in the same way as his opponent and began:

"Old Squire Bagly, from Menard, came into my office one day and said:

"'Lincoln, I want your advice as a lawyer. Has a man what's been elected justice of the peace a right to issue a marriage license?'

"I told him not, whereupon the old squire threw himself back in his chair very indignantly and said:

"'Lincoln, I thought you was a lawyer. Now, Bob Thomas and me had a bet on this thing, and we agreed to let you decide; but if this is your opinion I don't want it, for I know a thunderin' sight better. I've been a squire eight years and have done it all the time.'"

Not His Fish That Was Spoiled.

He dined wherever mealtime found him and in consequence in many different restaurants. It had become a habit to notice the dish which most of the other diners had and to order it. In this particular restaurant a fish dinner seemed to be the proper thing. An old man at the next table was particularly enjoying his fish. Presently the waiter brought the stranger his portion. He looked askance, sniffed freely and remarked to the waiter:

"I say, this fish does not seem to be quite fresh."

"Oh, yes, sir; yours is all right," said the waiter. "It's the other old gent's what's off color." And he motioned with his thumb to the ravenous one near by.—New York Tribune.

A Devoted Couple.

Mrs. Hartt—Yes, I have no doubt there are unhappy marriages, but really I cannot understand how they are possible. Now, there's George and I. We are so devoted. He says he could not exist without me, and I'm sure I live only for him.

Mrs. Greene—You really are to be congratulated, both of you. By the way, how long have you been married?

Mrs. Hartt—Just a week day after tomorrow.—Boston Transcript.

Can't Fool the Sex.

A young lady from London was visiting for the first time a country farm. Seeing a cow looking very savage, she said to an old farmer, "Oh, how savage that cow looks!"

"Yes, miss, it's the red parasol you are carrying," said the farmer.

"Well," she said, "I knew it was a trifle out of fashion, but I never thought a country cow would notice it."—Tit-Bits.

EATING FOR PLEASURE.

Many Palatable Articles of Food That Are Most Injurious.

Eating for the satisfying of hunger is a normal act. All living things, plants and animals alike, save man and the brutes he has debauched, do this as naturally as the winds blow themselves to rest. But eating to still the wanton cravings of the palate is unnatural and abnormal—is a physiological sin. It is no longer sufficient that food shall be nutritious and not distasteful; it must be palatable. That is the first requisite, and if it has the added virtue of sustaining qualities well, very good.

Just stop to think how much of your food is adapted to satisfy the fancies of the palate without regard for and often to the direct detriment of the highest efficiency of the food material. It is well known that oatmeal which has not been cooked long and well, that the starch globules may be all broken up, is exceedingly indigestible. But when thus properly cooked oatmeal is gelatinous and sticky. It does not look so well, and many people won't eat it so prepared because they like to taste the oatmeal flavor as the kernels are crushed in the mouth.

Then there is the matter of meat cooking. The deadly frying pan, that self inflicted instrument of death that has contributed so much to personal discomfort and permanent injury and hence to domestic trouble and discord, exists today solely because the people pander to their palates rather than feed their bodies.

What excuse is there for pastry of any kind except that it "tastes good?" Much of it is notoriously indigestible, and that part of it which can be easily taken up by the blood is generally the food elements that are not needed—the sugars, etc.—they having been included in sufficient quantity in the plainer fare.

Tea and coffee, both long acknowledged to be poison, to say nothing of others drinks sometimes taken with or between meals, are not in any way needed in the human physical economy, but their use is almost universal.—Everywhere.

Money Lenders In Europe.

The continental monts de piete had their origin in the Italian monti di pieta, large numbers of which were founded in Italy throughout the sixteenth century and the objects of which were in the first instance essentially charitable, the avowed purpose of the institution being to counteract the injurious effect of usury by lending money on deposits at an almost infinitesimal rate of interest. The Franciscan monks were the first to lend money on goods, and in 1515 they were allowed by the pope to receive a moderate amount of interest. But in process of time the Italian monti di pieta became [illegible] banking corporations, [illegible] occasionally plundered or half [illegible] by forced loans [illegible] to tyrannical princes and sometimes brought to entire collapse by [illegible] financial speculations.—London Telegraph.

Blooms the Year Round.

A horticulturist mentions a plant of the primrose family, Primula obconica, as the only one that can be had in flower all the year round. A large pot of this plant has flowered continuously for five years. The flowers are abundant and were originally of a pale lilac, but have recently improved not only in size, but in variety of color, white and many shades of lilac and pink rose being now obtainable. The cut flowers are pleasing for house decoration, while keeping fresh a long time in water. The plant thrives out of doors in summer, but requires hothouse protection in winter. The one objectionable quality is that both flowers and leaves poison the skin of some individuals.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Waterless Regions.

Hundreds of horses and thousands of cattle in the Hawaiian Islands never take a drink of water. They live on the upper altitudes of the mountains, where the cattle run wild from the time they are born until they are sent to the slaughter house. Except possibly for two or three months in the rainy season there are no streams or pools of water in any part where the cattle roam, but everywhere there grows a recumbent, jointed grass known by the native name of maninia. This is both food and drink.

Mud In the Mississippi.

It is estimated that the Mississippi river annually discharges into the gulf of Mexico 19,500,000,000,000 cubic feet of water. Of this prodigious quantity the one-twenty-ninehundredth part will be sediment. Thus the Mississippi annually deposits alone into the gulf of Mexico sufficient mud to cover a square mile of surface to a height of 240 feet.

THE GIANT OF THE FORCE.

Terror Inspired by a New England City's First Policeman.

Some of the old inhabitants of a small New England city were exchanging reminiscences the other day about the establishment of its police department. The force was small in numbers, but one of its members was almost a giant in size, 6 feet 4½ inches tall and broadly built. There chanced to be a hitch about the delivery of the men's uniforms, so that only one was received promptly, and the Goliath of the force stalked forth in his splendor alone.

Naturally he created a sensation. As he patrolled the long, winding street that ran the whole length of the place there were many comments upon his personal appearance, most of which were discreetly uttered after he had passed out of hearing.

At length, however, a shambling, shabby, sly eyed, crack witted ne'er do well stepped up and touched the gorgeous figure on the arm.

"Say, mister," he whispered humbly, "tell me the safest law to break, and I'll break it for the honor of walking down Main street with them buttons."

The information requested was not vouchsafed, and the giant marched on in his buttons and his dignity. But a little farther along a small boy who was playing in the front yard was no less impressed, although more bewildered, by the glittering and mighty apparition. He gave one look, eyes and mouth at their roundest, and then indoors, crying to his mother:

"Oh, mamma, look, look! Is he war or the circus?"

Even after he had become a familiar figure to the citizens the huge guardian of the peace retained some of his impressiveness. To one prisoner at least he so embodied the terrors of the law that the man submitted to an arrest which a few words of explanation at the time could have averted. When in court he did at length explain, the judge inquired in astonishment why he had not done so before. Smiling confidentially at his honor, the accused replied:

"Well, judge, it's like this: You're folks, but as for that Bunker Hill monument with a helmet on top, he may be a first rate handcuffin' machine, but he ain't a man. I didn't darst argufy with him. No, sir. I'd as soon thought of tryin' to make my position clear to the town fire injun."—Youth's Companion.

Just Retribution.

"My little one," said a newspaper man, "is two years old now, but has clung to her bottle of milk. Recently we began to give her regular food. We have a young pup at the house, so in explanation of the change I led her out on the porch and, showing her the pet, said: 'Tootsie, that baby dog drinks your milk now.' She did not say anything, only stamped her foot at it.

"The next morning my wife and I heard a terrific racket and squealing. Thinking the baby had been run over or hurt herself, we ran out. In the corner of the porch was the poor little dog, his nose in the air, the tears streaming from his eyes, and howling with all his puny might. The baby stood over it with a stick in her hand, and she was certainly using it. 'What for whip poor doggie?' we demanded. 'Teal my milt,' she lisped. 'Not doggie — piggie!'" — Philadelphia Telegraph.

A Reminder of a Tragedy.

In his book, "All the Russias," Henry Horman gives an interesting description of the bedroom of Czar Alexander II., which is kept exactly as it was on the morning he left it. He was brought back an hour after he left it bleeding to death from injuries inflicted by the assassin's bomb. As the room was, so it remains. The half smoked cigarette lies upon the ash tray in a glass tube. A little revolver lies before the mirror. Upon each of the tables and upon several chairs is a loosely folded clean handkerchief, for it was the czar's wish to have one of these always within reach of his hand. There lie all his toilet articles, a few plain bottles and brushes. It is all modest beyond belief, and the brushes are half worn.—Leslie's Weekly.

The Wheels of a Railroad.

On the Burlington railroad system of 8,000 miles, over 385,000 wheels are in service under the various passenger, freight and way cars, locomotives and other rolling stock. An average of 40,000 wheels are purchased each year, and they are very carefully inspected, as they are bought with a guarantee. According to the stipulation each is warranted to last six years, or cover 75,000 miles. All the wheels are numbered and a careful record kept. When they fail to do the work, they are returned to the manufacturer, who is compelled to make the loss good.