

OMEWHAT STRANGE

INCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EVERY DAY LIFE.

French and Thrilling Adventure Which Shows That Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction.

A FRENCH statistician, who has been studying the military and other records with a view of determining the height of man at different periods, has reached some wonderful results. He has not only solved some perplexing problems regarding the past of the human race, but is also enabled to calculate its future and to determine the exact period when man will disappear from the earth. The recorded facts extend over nearly three centuries. It is found that in 1610 the average height of man in Europe was 5 feet 6 inches, or say five feet nine inches. In 1790 it was five feet six inches. In 1850 it was five feet five inches and a half. At the present time it is five feet three and three-fourths inches. It is deduced from these figures a regular and gradual decline in human stature, and then apply this, working backward and forward to the past and to the future. By this calculation it is determined that the stature of the first man attained the surprising average of sixteen feet, nine inches. There were giants on the earth in those days. The race had already degenerated in the days of Og, and Goliath was a quite degenerate offspring of the giants. Coming down to later time we find that at the beginning of our era the average height of man was nine feet and eight inches. But the most astonishing result of this scientific study comes from the application of the same inexorable law of diminution to the future. The calculation shows that by the year 2000 A. D. the stature of the average man will be reduced to fifteen inches. At that epoch there will be only Lilliputians on the earth. And the conclusion of the learned statistician is irresistible; that "the end of the world will certainly arrive, for the inhabitants will have become so small that they will finally disappear." "Disappearance," as the French idiom expresses it, "from the terrestrial globe."

Mr. WALTER B. HARRIS, who has just returned to England from Tangier, writes a letter to the London Times which seems to prove beyond dispute the existence of the so-called "dwarfs" of Mount Atlas, about whom so much has been written of late. Mr. Harris encountered a number of these small folk and collected a good deal of material about them from their neighbors, who say that they inhabit the most inaccessible parts of the mountains to avoid the payment of tribute. But he does not believe in the pygmy or troglodyte theories. He says: "I think that it is now conclusively proved that the small people of Mount Atlas are not 'pygmies'—that they are, in fact, merely a certain collection of Shih tribes, who, through the high altitudes at which they live, and the extremes of climate they are subject to, from their poverty and inability to grow crops, from the scarcity and bad quality of such food as they are able to collect, have, in the lapse of centuries, become of almost extraordinarily stunted growth. Why then have they not been seen by former travelers? The answer is simple. Both Sir Joseph Hooker and Mr. Joseph Thomson, almost the only Europeans who have ever visited the Atlas, were during their travels entirely in lands governed by Kaidis representing the Sultan, and the very proximity of these Kaidis would drive the 'small people' to a distance, who would never on any account visit their castles. It is for this reason alone that the existence of a stunted race of which people must have failed to have attracted their notice."

FRANCIS W. JAMES of Port Townsend, Wash., who, with J. B. Webster of Oakland, was of the pioneer population of that Territory thirty odd years ago, stated in a letter to Mr. Webster recently that the Makah tribe of Indians at Cape Flattery, just south of Vancouver island, are increasing in numbers, which is unusual, and that they are as wealthy a community of Indians as exists in the United States, made so by their industry, also unusual and the increased value of sealkins. These Indians now have their own schooners, and cruise, with a white captain of course, as far north as Alaska, and are very successful. They also are noted whalers, and engage extensively in the cod, halibut and salmon fisheries, there being very extensive halibut banks a few miles seaward from Cape Flattery, which are now annually visited by a numerous fishing fleet. These banks were discovered by Mr. Webster and two other white men in 1839 and quantities of the fish caught and cured for market during the next few years by his company. Port Angeles is sixty miles from Cape Flattery and was thirty years ago without inhabitants, but is now a flourishing city of 5,000 inhabitants, with a grand future before it.

On Christmas Day, when the four-masted American ship *Cyrus Wakefield* was in a gale, First Mate William Mitchell was knocked overboard and swept overboard. He had climbed to the poop deck and had taken a firm hold of a life line to steady himself, when the sparker boom got adrift, and swinging around struck him and hurled him over the starboard quarter. One of the crew tied the deep-sea lead line to a life preserver and cast it overboard. Suddenly the lead line tightened as though a monster fish had seized it. "I have him! He's caught the line!" yelled the seaman. As the line threatened to part, a heavy sea struck the ship, and the crew were startled.

second line he also caught, and the crew started to haul him aboard. This was finally accomplished, but the first mate was more dead than alive when taken out of the water.

A most extraordinary story comes from Boise City, Idaho, which is said to be well authenticated. It is said that three travelers were at the upper end of Lake Chelan recently and one of them went bathing, when he was seized by the foot by a marine monster and was being pulled into deep water when his screams attracted the attention of his companions, who came to his rescue. They pulled him ashore, the monster hanging to his foot. It had legs and a body like an alligator and the head and eyes of a serpent. Between its fore and hind legs were large ribbed wings. The men tried hard to tear the monster from the foot of their companion and finally tried fire, which had the effect of causing the animal to rise suddenly into the air, taking the victim along and finally landing in the lake, where both disappeared from sight.

JOHN HOPKINS University still gossips of Professor Sylvester, the marvellous mathematician who came over from England to teach the science in which all his interests centered. His mind was ever occupied with mathematical problems, and all sorts of odd things happened to him on the streets of Baltimore. The most amusing episode of his life on this side, however, grew out of a voyage to Europe. While abroad he made some highly important calculations, but on reaching Baltimore he found that the paper on which he had figured was missing. So important were the calculations that he took a steamer back to England in order to look up the papers. He did not find them, and started back to the United States deeply disappointed; but during the voyage over he accidentally discovered in a pocket of the overcoat he had worn on the previous voyage the very thing he was in search of.

The plague of wolves in Shensi, a mountainous province of North China, is described as becoming more and more alarming. A correspondent in that part writes that in the village in which he is sojourning they had heard of eleven persons being carried off by these animals in seven days. Most of the victims were children; the rest young persons of sixteen, nineteen and twenty years of age. "They come," says the writer, "to our village here every night just now. Men are bestirring themselves, going out in large numbers to hunt them, as yet, however, unsuccessfully. To-night we have put poisoned mutton in two places not far off, hoping to find at least one dead wolf to-morrow. They roam in open daylight, besides entering villages and carrying off helpless little ones. Three went in company a few days ago into a native village; one of the number entered a hut and snatched a little child from his father's arms. Pursuit in every case has been futile. It seems this is their breeding time, hence their abnormal boldness."

The usefulness of carrying a sharp jack-knife was shown the other day in a Lewiston (Me.) mill, when one of the young women's hair came tumbling down as she passed a piece of heavy machinery and the ends of it caught in some slowly revolving cogwheels. The girl screamed, but did not have the presence of mind to break away at once before more strands of hair were caught and dragged in. She stood there holding out her arms and screaming while her head was drawn nearer and nearer to the fatal wheels. Then up came a man with a sharp jack-knife. He compassed the hair of the girl within his left hand and held it firmly as he might a rope and with the other hand severed the hair close to the wheels.

A RATHER ghastly story is told regarding a French Countess, a friend of Camille Flammarion, the astronomer. On one occasion, observing her in evening dress, he frankly expressed admiration of her beautiful shoulders. When she died, in accordance with her directions, enough skin to bind a book was removed from this part of her person, and sent to Flammarion, with a note gracefully asking him to use it as a cover for a volume of the next work he should publish. It is said that after a skillful tanner had been employed to prepare this strange memento, it was actually devoted to the use prescribed; and upon the cover was inscribed, in gilt letters, "Souvenir d'une morte."

THE picturesque little village of Payenne in Switzerland, not far from Lake Neuchâtel, possesses a unique curiosity in the shape of a saddle which belonged to Queen Bertha, the founder of the Benedictine Abbey, which has since been transformed into one of the best educational institutes of Europe. This saddle, which is more than 900 years old, is of peculiar antique shape, having an aperture for the knee in the pommel. Queen Bertha was noted for her zeal and industry, and in order to set a good example to her subjects she always rode from one place to another to gain time.

A QUEER rabbit story, which beast "Uncle Remus" at his best, comes from Davidson, N. C. John Hedrick killed a very large rabbit during the snow. It had a large raised place on the inside of the left hind leg which he cut into and found between the flesh and hide two leather-winged bats, which were full grown. The bats were fastened to the flesh of the rabbit by a leader or something similar. There was not a broken place in the hide until Mr. Hedrick cut it.

AN extraordinary case of suicide is reported in the Berlin papers. A sixteen-year-old boy, feeling himself humiliated by a severe punishment that had been administered by his parents, leaped from a high window of his home, and landed on a pile of straw. He was found by a neighbor, who called for help. The boy was taken to the hospital, but died before the doctors could reach him.

THE monomaniac who, in 1880, stopped Queen Victoria while she was riding on horseback in Hyde Park and proposed marriage to her, has recently died in Bedlam, the celebrated insane asylum of London. He seemed to be perfectly sound on every other subject, was well educated, and wrote very sensible letters relating to insane asylums and the reforms which could be made in them. He was eighty-four years old.

MEN cutting ice at Buxton, Me., found a half-blown water lily imbedded in one of the cakes. It was thawed out, put in a sunny window, and soon bloomed out as handsomely as any lily of July.

Mountainous Atlantic Waves.

The New York daily papers all recorded the fact that the steamship *Majestic*, on her eastward trip, caught a sea that demolished her crew's nest lookout, and the *Tautonic*, which caught the same gale coming west, had one sea which combed over the crew's nest and carried away her forward port lifeboat as it went over the rail. But none of the daily papers took the trouble to mention just how the crew's nest on these ships is situated and consequently how high that sea was.

Inquiry by a Marine Journal representative discovered that while in men-of-war and many other ships the custom is to have the crew's nest in the foretop or a trifle above, the *White Star* ships have it at an altitude of twenty-five feet above the main deck on the foremast, reached by an iron ladder from the forward hurricane deck.

In such a ship as the *Majestic* or *Tautonic* the height of the main deck at the fore rigging is about forty feet above the level of the sea, which would make the height of the wave that carried away the crew's nest in this instance about seventy feet.

This is a pretty big roller for the North Atlantic, but in other parts of the ocean such waves are often encountered in a storm.

Supposing the ship to have been in the trough of the sea at the time this wave swept her, the main height of the wave might be calculated as not greater than forty feet, but it was certainly a body of water nearly seventy feet high from where the ship floated.

RELIABLE RECIPES.

TO BROIL STEAK.—Steak for broiling should not be thin or it will be dry and hard; at the market, ask them to cut your steak three-fourths of an inch thick, cut off the suet, grease the broiler and have it hot, lay the steak on the broiler on a bed of hot coals, turn the broiler often; when done remove to a hot platter, sprinkle with salt and spread butter over it; serve immediately.

ROAST LOIN OF VEAL.—Take a white and fat loin of veal with the kidney attached; saw off the spine and remove what is left of the hip bone, season with salt and pepper; tie up the flop over the kidney, put in a buttered sautoir with a glass of water, and bits of butter on top; cover with a buttered paper, and cook in a moderate oven for nearly two hours, basting occasionally with the gravy; drain, untie, place on a dish, add a little broth to the sautoir, skim the fat, reduce to a demi-glaze sauce, strain over the veal, and serve.

STUFFED BREAST OF PORK.—A large slice of round is best for this; if there is any bone, with a small knife, loosen the bone and take it out, season with salt and pepper; have ready prepared some dressing, made of stale bread crumbs, moistened with cold water, seasoned with one egg, a spoonful of butter, salt and a little parsley or sifted sage, mix well and spread on the slice of steak, roll up closely and wind with a cord; have the oven very hot, put it in a tin in the oven, bake half an hour, mix a spoonful of butter and water together and put in the tin while baking; when done, remove the cord and serve hot, cut in slices from the end of the roll.

A Well Ventilated Tomb.

The most peculiar and eccentric character that ever lived in Alabama was Thomas Banks, who died at Montgomery some time during the year 1890. Physicians say that he would have lived years longer than he did had it not been for the fact that he was continually brooding over the danger of being buried alive. He was a man of considerable property, being rated at about \$200,000, but to his way of looking at the matter money could not provide against the horrors of a premature burial. Away back in the '70s he had a mausoleum built in the Montgomery Cemetery, and directed that he and his only brother should be laid there together after death. In 1880 the brother died and was carefully and tenderly laid away in one of the niches of the mausoleum. After this solemn event Thomas had his bedroom furniture moved to the tomb and ever after regularly made his toilet there. As mentioned above Thomas also died in 1890; and now the two brothers lie within handy reach of fresh air should either wake from his dreamless sleep.

The Banks brothers were natives of North Carolina, and went to Montgomery some time about the year 1855.—[St. Louis Republic.]

ONE of the exhibits in the railroad section at the World's Fair will be a series of pictures illustrating the history of the railroad from the time when it was two miles of wooden rails, over which a mule pulled a clap-boarded wagon twice a day, to these times of thousand mile runs and record breaking. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is having these pictures painted by Mr. Paul Moran of this city, who will make a large number of them in black and white.

POPULAR SCIENCE NOTES.

ELECTRICITY IN AGRICULTURE.—Electricity has been successfully applied in agricultural operations at the Polytechnic Institute of Alabama, at which place a motor has been at work since last spring threshing oats, wheat, rye and barley, cutting ensilage, grinding corn and ginning and pressing cotton. And this, writes Franklin L. Pone, in the current number of the *Engineering Magazine*, is going on in a State where less than fifty years ago hundreds of miles of telegraph lines were destroyed by a mob of farmers, because the wires were supposed to have superinduced a distressing drought which occurred shortly after their erection. Verily, the world moves.

SILK FROM WOOD PULP.—A revival of interest is noted in the attempts started some years ago, particularly in France, to manufacture silk from wood pulp, and by methods, as proposed by M. Chardonner, similar in principle to that employed for converting wood into paper. It is well known that, a few years ago, large works were built at Besancon, and preparations for manufacturing silk in this way were projected and carried out on a somewhat extensive scale; the result was that, though remarkably satisfactory specimens of silk made by the process in question were shown, it was found that the fabric so manufactured could not be woven successfully in large pieces, and that it was of so highly inflammable a nature as to be a source of great danger. To overcome these difficulties very thorough experiments have for some time past been under way, and with such results that the company having the industry in charge claim to be able to furnish a substitute for silk possessing all the essential qualities characterizing that article, and which is expected to be put upon the market at about one-half the cost of the genuine article, dress pieces, ribbons, etc., being included in the prospective goods.

SOUNDS WE MAY NOT HEAR.—Animals may hear sounds that are inaudible to us. Certainly the sounds that give the keenest pleasure to many animals—cats, for example—are seldom capable of giving pleasure to us. We know, of course, that sounds may be too low or too high—that is, the vibrations may be too slow or too rapid—to be audible to the human ear; but it does not follow that they are equally inaudible to differently-tuned ears. The limits of audible sound are not invariable even in the human ear; women can usually hear higher sounds than men, and the two ears are not, as a rule, equally keen. A sound may be quite inaudible to one person and plainly heard by another. Prof. Lloyd-Morgan mentions as an instance of this a case in which the piping of some frogs in Africa was so loud to him as almost to drown his friend's voice, but of which his friend heard absolutely nothing! The same thing may be observed by any one possessing the little instrument known as Galton's whistle. The sound made by this whistle can be made more and more shrill, until as last it ceases to be heard at all by most persons. Some can still hear it; but by raising the sound still higher even they cease to hear. The sound is still being made—that is, the whistle is causing the air still to vibrate, but so rapidly that our ears no longer recognize it, though the existence of these inaudible vibrations is detected by a "sensitive flame," as was first shown by Prof. Barrett in 1877.—[Chamber's Journal.]

Cruelties of Nurses.

Servants employed to look after the little folks are, as a rule, so anxious for their own pleasure that they frequently slap their charges into submission in order to be free to gossip with their confidantes below stairs. This course of action usually takes place at bedtime, and any frolicsome disposition on the part of little "wide awake" is, according to the personal observation of our informant, speedily reduced to a condition of sobbing and sleep, owing to the employment of methods known only to these guardians of these treasures of the home. There are other atrocities also practised on children by their nurses, which savor of actual cruelty. If these cases are numerous, can it be possible mothers are unaware of them? Is it that the duties of society so completely take up both time and attention that the doings of the nursery are unknown to the mothers of the little dwellers therein? Motherhood is a far nobler office than social leadership, and the little souls commended to a mother's keeping are greater treasures than the diamonds that are the envy of all other women in that circle in which only the elect move. Therefore these human jewels should be guarded with a constant and jealous eye, and their caretakers should be chosen with due regard to their mental and bodily welfare, instead of selected at random simply to get somebody who will be capable of keeping the children out of sight and hearing when company is around, by whatever means, fair or foul, they choose to employ.—[New York Telegram.]

Beauty in the Daisy and Harebell.

If a daisy were but as scarce as a diamond, how would the multitudes rush to adore the little golden-eyed star in the grass! One of the most exquisitely beautiful things I ever saw in my life was a thick tuft of harebell glittering all over with dew on a sunny morning where it grew on a mossy wall. It was not worth sixpence, yet it was a thing to kneel down before and adore and remember fervently evermore.—[Ouida.]

There are said to be 17,000 styles of silk, but it makes little difference to the women who have to wear them, for how many styles there are.

HE KILLED TIGERS.

A White Man's Adventure in Chinese Jungles.

For years Frank Leyburn has been known as the tiger player of Amoy. There is not a village along the coast of China, no matter how remote from the great centres of population, to which his fame has not extended. With him the killing of the great man eaters who infest the jungles is looked upon as a pastime, and he has shot them under almost all imaginable circumstances.

"Oh, yes," he said in a gruff tone when asked about his experiences as a tiger hunter. "I have bagged a good many of the beasts in my day, but there is nothing remarkable about that. With us, don't you know, it's merely a pastime, and we hunt the tigers for the sport there is in it. Why, bless my soul, I can see no reason why any one should care to hear about tiger hunting. With us it's ordinary sport, just as deer stalking is in America."

"After all," he continued, as he grasped his cane more firmly and planted his feet very wide apart, "the tigers of China are not nearly as ferocious as those of India, but they give a good deal of trouble to the natives at times. When one of them gets a taste of human blood he at once becomes ferocious, and is never satisfied with any other diet. They become transformed into what are known as man eaters, and they hunt human beings as a cat does mice."

"Take a big man, for instance," and he is pretty sure to make his lair in a jungle close to a native village, avoiding the larger towns, and always on the alert to make a victim of some luckless human being who may fall in his way. It is his habit to lurk about the outskirts of the settlement, concealed in the edges of the jungle, and await his opportunity to seize a victim. Moonlight nights suit him best. At such a time he is extremely vigilant. He prowls about until he sees some belated straggler in the streets. This is the opportunity for which he has waited for hours, perhaps for days. There is the flash of a heavy body in the moonlight, a cry of terror, a brief struggle, and the man eater is off for his lair in the jungle, bearing the helpless body of a human being in his massive jaws. Months later, it may be, the bones are found in the dense undergrowth."

"When I went to China twenty years ago I had already some experience in hunting big game, and I wanted to kill a tiger. One day while in the counting house of our firm at Amoy two natives came in in an excited frame of mind to tell that a man had been carried off from a neighboring village the night before by a man eater. This was just the opportunity I had been waiting for. Taking out a heavy express rifle which I had brought from London with me, I took the two natives to act as guides and started out. On reaching the village I found everything in an uproar. The natives, who are timid, were paralyzed with fear, and scarcely dared to venture out of their houses unless in the middle of the day."

"I had already learned something about the habits of the man eater and knew just how to go at it. From inquiry among the natives I ascertained the exact location of the lair of the tiger, and for a small compensation I succeeded in securing the services of a coolie to guide me to the place."

"Starting late in the afternoon, we made our way slowly through the jungle, and just about dusk reached the spot. Now, the night is the best time to bag a man eater, for he is then asleep, and may be shot before he is aroused. Knowing this, I had brought with me a bull's-eye lantern. Before night had set in fully I got everything in readiness, and waited until it grew pitch dark. Having in the meantime located the exact position of the lair, I left my guide, who by this time was almost terror-stricken, behind me, and on my hands and knees crept through the jungle. By the cautious use of my lantern I found the lair. Turning on the light, I was a little startled to discover the huge beast curled up and sound asleep. His head was resting on his paws and squarely facing me. As I prepared to level my rifle at him he stirred uneasily. Turning the light full upon him, he raised his head, but before he was thoroughly aroused I sent a ball from my rifle crashing through his brain. By good fortune I had struck him squarely between the eyes. There was a feast of rejoicing in the village when I returned with the skin."

"Just before I left China on my present trip, I struck a man eater, who proved to be a tough customer. He was an old fellow and had a record of about twenty victims. They sent for me and I went after him. I had with me a double-barrelled rifle of large calibre. I found no difficulty in tracing him to his lair, but he gave me a narrow call before I succeeded in finishing him. The trouble was that when I found him he was awake and ferocious, apparently from the effects of hunger. I had shot so many that I thought nothing of it and gave my tiger one barrel out of my gun. Most unaccountably I missed him clean, and his eyes fairly blazed. Lashing the ground with his tail, he sprang toward me like a flash. As he was in the air I let go with the other barrel and struck him in the left shoulder, the heavy ball penetrating to his heart. He fell at my feet, and so close was he that before he died I could feel his hot breath upon me. It was the most narrow escape that I ever had. When measured the tiger was found to be almost twelve feet in length, and his claws were one and three-quarter inches in length. I had the latter mounted and distributed them among my friends.—[San Francisco Examiner.]

Servant—Please, sir, the coal is all out. Mr. Wearie—Well, here's a big pile of burning letters for that last box from them.—[New York Weekly.]