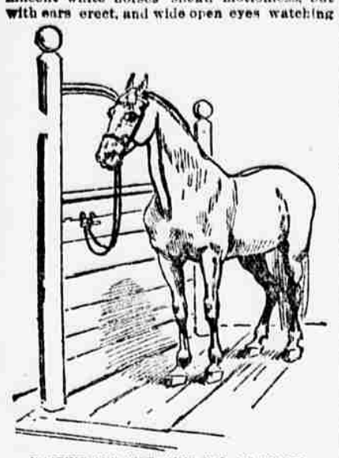
FIRE HORSES WISE AS MEN.

LOTS OF CREDIT DUE TO THE TUGGERS OF ENGINES AND HOSE CARTS.

They are Picked Out for their Strength, Swiftness, Sagacity, and Kindness, and are Trained Before Going to Regular Work—Some Need No Drivers—How they Eat and Sleep, and Recognize Signals.

Not very many days ago one of THE SUN'S young men happened to stand in the engine room of one of the companies of the city Fire Department, talking with the foreman of the company about a recent fire. The young man had been in a fire engine house a good many times before, and the scene to him was not particularly novel or interesting. It was a big square room, smelling horsey and strong, yet was scrupulously clean and neat, and resplendent with the polished steel and brass, and the painted woodwork of the engine and hose cart and chief's wagon. In this particular engine house the hose cart happened to be in the front of the room, before the street doors, with the horse stalls on either side of it, against the sides of the room. The stalls were parallel with the hose cart. Back of the hose cart was the engine, big and shiny with the "ready" steam hissing into it through pipes from the boiler below. The chief's cart was at one side of the engine, and in a corner of the room was the fuel wagon. In the side stalls stood two magnificent white horses—silent, motionless, but with ears erect, and wide open eyes watching

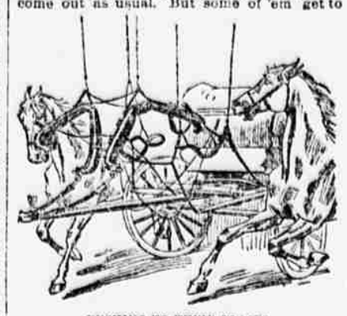


WAITING AND WATCHING FOR AN ALARM.

the foreman and THE SUN'S young man, and apparently very anxious to join in the conversation about the fire. Suddenly a jingle bell in the room beat a lively rattle, and the fire gong began to ring out an alarm. The firemen slid down from upstairs on the polished rods of brass which stretched from the ground floor through scuttle holes into the firemen's sitting room, and took their several stations. The man on "house watch" counted the gong strokes. As the electric snap on the bits of the horses in their stalls were unfastened, the horses jumped to their places at a bound, down came the hanging harness upon them, and collar, headstall, and rein bit were fastened by ready hands in less than two seconds. Before the gong stopped sounding engine and men and horses were ready to rush into the street if the alarm should turn out to be a call from their part of the city. The alarm did not so turn out, and all went back to their places.

It was a familiar scene, but one could not help wondering at the marvellous efficiency of the training of these horses which made them better than men in their especial work in the Fire Department—an efficiency which was tested in the recent outburst of blazes a few weeks ago as hardly ever before in the history of the department. People had a great deal to say in deserved eulogy of the laborious efforts of the firemen in that busy time; but not enough has been said and not enough can be said in praise of the dumb brutes whose intelligence supplemented the firemen's heroism, and who, like the firemen, were eager.

A horse comes into the service of the department on somewhat stricter terms than a man does—the horse doesn't have to stand any sham civil service examination. The horse is selected—not purchased—in the open market or not. There are a great many horses in the department that don't do it. Most of those which will are the old horses. It annoys a real spirited horse to run out to the tele every time the gong strikes and not start with the engine. He frets and worries and whinnies and acts just as tensed as a horse can. They get to know some signals, though, and they play us cute tricks. Now, at noon every day every engine company gets the time on the gong from headquarters and the horses come out as usual. But some o 'em get to



RUSHING TO THEIR PLACES.

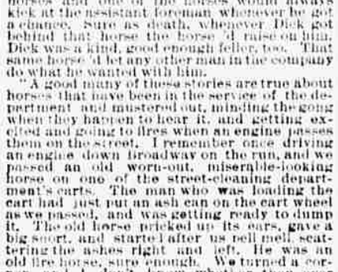
know that they never go out of the house on that signal, and they whirl around after coming to the pole and get back to the stalls again. The men who have to snap the collars have to be mighty quick or they don't get a chance to snap the collars, and at noontime it's generally a race between the men and the horses to see who gets to the pole first.

"Why, certainly a horse knows he's going to a fire," I know he does, and every man who knows anything about a fire horse knows so, too. With all their mad rush as they go down the street they are cautious, and they don't rely on the driver's rein to tell them when to turn out of the way of an obstruction. They get to know the location of hydrants in their district, and they pull right up to them. They can tell when they're coming near a fire just as well as the driver can, and when they smell the smoke or see the blaze they give a lively tug on the engine. I think a horse can tell whether it is a big fire or not, too. The noise of other engines they hear going to the fire excites them. When they get to the fire, too, they're alive, you bet. You know the place of a horse on a tender at a fire is at the back of the engine. Well, when a horse has pulled the tender right up to the burning building, so that the men can use the hose, it is entirely free. It is unwound the horse will turn and trot back to its engine, just as unconcernedly as can be, and will pick its engine out from all the others.

"It's a queer thing about the likes and dislikes horses will take. They are just as queer about that as men and women are. Of course horses have of all kinds and some will let anybody pet 'em and some won't let anybody come near 'em while they are in the stalls. But often a horse will take a great notion or a great aversion to some one man in the company. I was in a company once six years with a team of horses and one of the horses would always kick at the assistant foreman whenever he got a chance. Sure as death, whenever Dick got behind that horse the horse d raise on him. Dick was a kind, good enough feller, too. That same horse didn't hit any other man in the company do what he wanted with him.

"A good many of these stories are true about horses that have been in the service of the department and mustered out, minding the gong when they hamen to hear it, and getting excited and going to fires when an engine passes them on the street. I remember once driving an engine down Broadway on the run, and we passed an old worn-out, miserable-looking horse on one of the street-cleaning department's carts. The man who was loading the cart had just put an ash can on the cart when as we passed the horse was getting ready to dump it. The old horse picked up its ears, gave a big snort, and started after us pell mell, scattering the ashes right and left. He was an old fire horse, sure enough. We turned a corner, and I don't know whether they ever stopped him or not. A good many of our horses go to the street-cleaning department when we get through with them. We keep horses till they get pretty old, though, if they are good ones. Old horses know the ropes so well that they are good to have around, but, of course, we can't keep 'em always, and they lose their snap after a while."

Twice a year the foreman of each company in the department makes a written report to



HARNESSED IN LESS THAN THREE SECONDS.

Superintendent Shea of the condition, age, and history of every horse then in his house. The foreman must notify the Superintendent when any horse is so sick as to require medical attendance, and then away goes the horse to the hospital at Ninth avenue and Ninety-ninth street. This also is under the charge of Superintendent Shea, assisted by a full corps of veterinary surgeons. Minor ailments are treated at the engine houses. The Superintendent knows the horses by numbers, and he is supposed to keep himself informed of the exact condition of every horse in the department. He is supposed to make constantly the rounds of the engine houses, and inspect the horses, besides relying upon the reports of the foreman. The average life of a horse in the department is about nine years. The quick, nervous, almost hard movement, tugging heavy loads and the sudden and frequent call upon their energy make few horses last longer in service than the time stated. A horse has night events the same as a man has, and the sudden plunges which the animal has to make into the night air at these times affects a horse's constitution somewhat as a man's would do. But the horses do not shrink any more than they hesitate to leave their food when the gong sounds in the daytime.

There are few horses in the department which bites in more than three seconds. This, however, applies only to horses whose stalls are near their engines. In some engine houses the stalls are very inconveniently arranged in this respect, and a good deal more time is consumed in getting the new first-class engine horses companies get out of the house in about six seconds from the time the gong begins to sound. They could do it much quicker than this if they did not have to wait till the end of the striking to see whether the call was for them or not. If they could go out on the first tap of the gong, they would go out as soon as the horses were hitched.

The practice of hitching the horses, calling down the men, and making ready to go out in each engine house every time an alarm sounds in the city keeps every horse and man on a come and go all the time, and the fires are strong in the end of the island hitch almost as fast, doubtless, as those in the dry goods district, yet, of course, places on the force in the down-town business section are considered more arduous and important, both for horses and men, and that there is a little more "snap" in the down-town horses few will deny. Of these horses the white team on the tender of Engine 24 in Morton street have long been famous for their time in hitching. They always hitch in less than two seconds. Each horse is now 16 years old, and perhaps they are getting a little old; but they are a great team still. Firemen down town generally think, though, that "Charlie" and "Joe," the bay and roan horses which pull No. 6 engine, which is also in Morton street near Chambers street, are rather the crack team of the department just at present. This pair have hitched in 1½ seconds, and this is said to be the best record.

THE ALARM HAS SOUNDED.

by experience! horsemen. These men only deal, of course, with drivers whom they know to be trustworthy and who have, in fact, furnished most of the horses to the department for years. Strength, agility, intelligence, kindness—these are the traits the buyers look at. A reliable horse can expect to tug one of the 5,000 pound engines or the massive hook and ladder trucks—such a one, for instance, as that of Hook and Ladder Company No. 9, on Elizabeth street. That a horse must be quick and intelligent to start from his stall in the daytime or from his bed at night like a man, at the sound of the gong, and put forth all his powers suddenly goes without saying. And kindness in a horse is apt to be thought more of by firemen than at first seems likely, for the horses' stalls in the engine house are generally right in the centre of the building, and a wicked horse, besides raising Cain generally, has a constant opportunity to bite or kick the men about him.

When a horse has been picked out he is sent to the training stables of the department at Tenth avenue and 127th street, and Capt. Joseph Shea, superintendent of horses, takes him in hand. The horse is set to tugging big loads, and is punched and coaxed and shouted, and is exercised generally for fifteen days. Capt. Shea has an old fire engine at his quarters, and the horse is drilled with this, too, and is taught to notice and to mind the gong. If Capt. Shea doesn't like the horse—and Capt. Shea doesn't like any but good horses—the horse is sent back to the dealer or his former master. No horses are bought except on probation. If the horse seems to be a good one, Capt. Shea sends him to some engine house for practical trial. The horse is made there to do the same kind of work that other horses do, and if after fifteen days more the officer in command of the company doesn't like him, back he goes to the stables. If he is a very bad or stupid horse, the department rejects him finally. But the department has other uses for horses, of course, besides that of tugging engines and trucks to fires. It needs heavy supply wagons and in its repair shops, and in a great many other places, and if the horse can be used at all he is put at these kinds of work.

"Some horses are kind o' dead like," said the Chief, on whom the reporter had called. "We coax 'em and teach 'em and show 'em over and over again what to do, but it's no use—they never know anything. Then an intelligent horse is sometimes vicious, and though mighty quick at getting to fires has some trick or other, so that we always have to be on the lookout. But a horse that has the sense to make a good fire horse in him, generally gets to learn his business in about three months. I have come to believe more and more that a horse is about as intelligent as a man. We can let some of 'em out in the street, and when they hear the gong sound they'll come back to the engine house and get by the pole in a jiffy. We can take a good horse for a tender, he don't wait for his driver to get into the seat, but out he goes when the engine goes, driver or no driver. A good tender horse'll never be more than a foot behind the engine as he goes down the street.

"A horse comes to know his feeding time and he gets restless and uneasy when those times come, though I suppose all horses do the same. A fire horse get so accustomed to regularity, though, that he knows when he ought to be fed just as if he could read the clock. The driver generally feeds and takes care of the horses, though he consults with the company officer about what feed he shall give 'em. He puts the feed in the forward corner of the stall, opposite the corner across which the horse has to rush to his engine. Otherwise the latter corner would get ragged, and the horse would stumble as he dashed across it. One of the hardest things we have to teach a horse is to leave his food and get to the engine when the gong sounds. It's a good test of the stubbornness or docility of a horse, whichever way you've a mind to put it, whether he'll do this by experience! horsemen. These men only deal, of course, with drivers whom they know to be trustworthy and who have, in fact, furnished most of the horses to the department for years. Strength, agility, intelligence, kindness—these are the traits the buyers look at. A reliable horse can expect to tug one of the 5,000 pound engines or the massive hook and ladder trucks—such a one, for instance, as that of Hook and Ladder Company No. 9, on Elizabeth street. That a horse must be quick and intelligent to start from his stall in the daytime or from his bed at night like a man, at the sound of the gong, and put forth all his powers suddenly goes without saying. And kindness in a horse is apt to be thought more of by firemen than at first seems likely, for the horses' stalls in the engine house are generally right in the centre of the building, and a wicked horse, besides raising Cain generally, has a constant opportunity to bite or kick the men about him.

When a horse has been picked out he is sent to the training stables of the department at Tenth avenue and 127th street, and Capt. Joseph Shea, superintendent of horses, takes him in hand. The horse is set to tugging big loads, and is punched and coaxed and shouted, and is exercised generally for fifteen days. Capt. Shea has an old fire engine at his quarters, and the horse is drilled with this, too, and is taught to notice and to mind the gong. If Capt. Shea doesn't like the horse—and Capt. Shea doesn't like any but good horses—the horse is sent back to the dealer or his former master. No horses are bought except on probation. If the horse seems to be a good one, Capt. Shea sends him to some engine house for practical trial. The horse is made there to do the same kind of work that other horses do, and if after fifteen days more the officer in command of the company doesn't like him, back he goes to the stables. If he is a very bad or stupid horse, the department rejects him finally. But the department has other uses for horses, of course, besides that of tugging engines and trucks to fires. It needs heavy supply wagons and in its repair shops, and in a great many other places, and if the horse can be used at all he is put at these kinds of work.

"Some horses are kind o' dead like," said the Chief, on whom the reporter had called. "We coax 'em and teach 'em and show 'em over and over again what to do, but it's no use—they never know anything. Then an intelligent horse is sometimes vicious, and though mighty quick at getting to fires has some trick or other, so that we always have to be on the lookout. But a horse that has the sense to make a good fire horse in him, generally gets to learn his business in about three months. I have come to believe more and more that a horse is about as intelligent as a man. We can let some of 'em out in the street, and when they hear the gong sound they'll come back to the engine house and get by the pole in a jiffy. We can take a good horse for a tender, he don't wait for his driver to get into the seat, but out he goes when the engine goes, driver or no driver. A good tender horse'll never be more than a foot behind the engine as he goes down the street.

"A horse comes to know his feeding time and he gets restless and uneasy when those times come, though I suppose all horses do the same. A fire horse get so accustomed to regularity, though, that he knows when he ought to be fed just as if he could read the clock. The driver generally feeds and takes care of the horses, though he consults with the company officer about what feed he shall give 'em. He puts the feed in the forward corner of the stall, opposite the corner across which the horse has to rush to his engine. Otherwise the latter corner would get ragged, and the horse would stumble as he dashed across it. One of the hardest things we have to teach a horse is to leave his food and get to the engine when the gong sounds. It's a good test of the stubbornness or docility of a horse, whichever way you've a mind to put it, whether he'll do this

THE GET-THERE TUG.

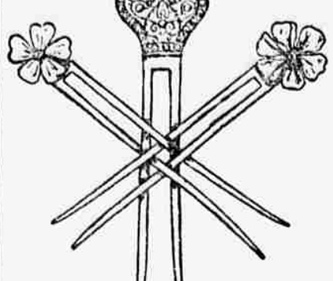
HIGH ART IN HAIRPINS.

THE THINGS OF BEAUTY WITH WHICH WOMEN BIND THEIR TRESSES.

Almost Endless Variety of Ornamentation—The Very Latest Designs Described and Pictured—Hairpins that Cost $600—The Lavish Use of Precious Stones.

There is no one article of woman's dress that serves so many useful purposes, relieves her from the embarrassment of so many emergencies, and aids her in the accomplishment of so many designs as a hairpin. With it she not only controls the waywardness of her flying tresses, but also fastens her gloves, buttons her shoes, opens her letters, cuts her magazines and papers, takes the corks out of bottles and the knots out of strings, secures the sashes of silk and lace which she ties on her chairs and sofas, and fastens her bonnet in place. One scholastic young woman with an inventive turn of mind and an antipathy for needles and thread, devised an ingenious method of fastening her shoes with a hairpin twisted in a peculiar way in place of buttons, but this practice cannot be classed among the generalities, and as it produced in the isolated case just described the disastrous effect of alienating the young woman's betrothed lover from her, we could not conscientiously recommend its general use.

The artistic simplicity of Grecian maidens in the arrangement of their hair, bound their waving locks with a fillet of gold or silver, or twisted them in a close, soft knot, which the fillet held in place; but the Roman ladies of the later days of the republic and of the luxuriousness of the empire were not satisfied with this simple fashion. Their long, perfumed hair was brushed and braided, wound round and round their heads like a coronet, and held in place with jewelled pins of gold and silver. Hairpins for poorer people were formed of long, slim bones, or rudely carved wood, of the long, polished thorns of certain trees, and later of polished wire, shell, gold, and silver. Ornamental hairpins were for a time supplanted by large combs of carved shell, wrought gold and silver, and embellished with precious stones; but at present they are more popular with fashionable people than ever before. The new designs are larger, more elaborate, and more richly ornamented than formerly, and correspondingly increased in price.



APPLE BLOSSOM OF GOLD, WITH DIAMOND CENTRE.—CROWN PIN, GOLD, PIERCED WORK SET WITH PEARLS.—WILD ROSE, WITH DIAMOND CENTRE.

Pins of Bohemian garnet, set in quaint and artistic designs, range in price from $5 to $100.

GOLD PIERCED WORK.

A pretty novelty in garnets is a graceful spray of flowers and leaves encrusted with garnets, and set on a long gold hairpin. Another pretty and suggestive design for a gift is a true-lover's knot of large brilliant garnets, with depending tassels of gold filigree. Butterflies, flowers, stars, and targets of garnets, with pins of gold, silver, or shell are very pretty and effective. In the artistic set of Bohemian garnets presented to Mrs. Cleveland by a Bohemian society in New York, and which was designed and imported for her, there is a large and brilliant hairpin in the form of an eagle, fashioned entirely of fine and handsomely cut garnets.

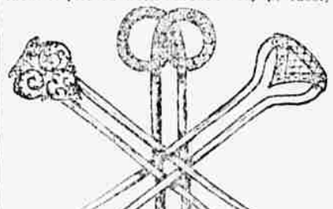
CHASED GOLD.

The new designs in gold hairpins are very elaborate and costly, large in size and brilliant with jewels—the most expensive being those of pierced work studded very profusely

GOLD PIERCED WORK—GOLD CHASED SET WITH DIAMONDS—GOLD NET WORK.

with diamonds. The ornament at the top of the pin is two and one half inches in height, and nearly two inches broad, and contains four diamonds and an equal number of sapphires. Pins of this kind are made to order from special designs, and range in price from $100 to $500 or even more, according to the size and brilliancy of the stones used. A very pretty, but small design of pierced work in gold, bordered with a band of pearls, makes a beautiful ornament in dark hair, and is sold for $27.

Butterflies with gauzy wings of fine gold filigree are very popular and stylish, while small flowers with fine stamens of filigree and delicately chiseled petals are found in great variety. A ball of tiny enameled forget-me-nots in natural colors costs $30, and morning pins of black enamel are seen in many forms and varying prices. Plain small gold hairpins, for use rather than ornament, are $2.50, and are very popular with fair-haired women to hold their braids and coils of hair in place while shell pins of the same form are preferred by women with dark hair for this purpose. Among cheaper pins a simple heavy gold ball at the end of a long gold pin, sometimes set with three or four small diamonds, finds favor with fashionable women. Daggers eight inches in length are also shown in heavy gilt, and look as if they might be used as weapons of defence in times of danger.



SILVER SET WITH DIAMONDS.

Shell pins in both amber and mottled shell are very much worn, and are carved in the same elaborate designs shown in gold pins. These designs are usually inclined to one side more than the other, sometimes cut down from the centre, and one side bent back and over, while the other stands upright. When handsomely carved they are so thin as to cost dollars, owing to the extreme difficulty in carving them without splitting the shell.

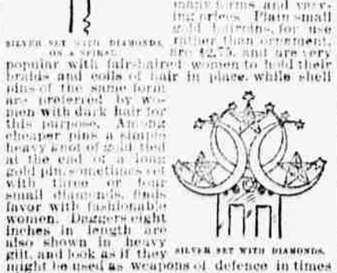
SILVER SET WITH DIAMONDS.

SMALL GOLD PIN FOR HAIR.—SHELL PIN, WITH GOLD MOUNTINGS.—SHELL PIN, WITH GOLD STARS AND ON ONE BAR.

Shell pins are also worn with amber ornaments, consisting of one, two, or three pear-shaped amber drops standing upright and handsomely cut. Amber stars, balls, and cubes are also used effectively in dark hair, or used as bonnet pins against a contrasting color.

Among the curios in a shop of antique bric-a-brac are some old German hairpins of solid silver, surmounted with a small coil of silver encircled with inscriptions in German characters. They are still in good condition, and are antique and rare is a hairpin of solid silver, hammered into shape and curiously carved by hand, which came from India and is more than two hundred years old.

Women are inclined to be very particular concerning the kind of hairpins they use, as it plays a prominent part in each one's permanent abiding place in the structure of their coiffure. The close and intimate copartnership formed among school girls of the most impressionable and affectionate age, sharing secrets, love-letters, jewelry, and most toilet articles, is apt to dissolve on the hairpin question, and each one carefully guards the little collection of shell, wire, gold, or silver pins, with which she at the same time arranges and ornaments her braids and coils.



GOLD PIERCED WORK.

BOSTON, THE COFFIN CITY.

It's the Country's Great Depot for Undertakers' Supplies.

BOSTON, April 14.—This is a charming place to die in. Not in all the world is there another city where so much respect is paid to corpses. Many a priceless acre in the busiest quarter is crowded with the mouldering bones of the ancient inhabitants. In any other town the useless remains would have been dug up long ago to make room for surviving generations of shopkeepers. Such desecration would not be possible, however, in Boston. In the eyes of the modern Athenian the dust of his forefathers is holy. A considerable portion of the Common itself is fenced in for the exclusive use of a lot of these antique cadavers. From the Tremont House to the old church on Brimstone Corner extends a fabulously valuable tract, the soil of which is enriched with all that was mortal of many a once respectable citizen. Across the street is another graveyard of Revolutionary interest, and a number more are scattered here and there—abodes of silence and decay.

In Boston nothing is held to be too good for a blue-blooded corpse. Two coffins just now being made by a local manufacturer—to be used some day by a granddaughter of the Baron Von Wurtemburg and her husband—will cost not less than $5,000 apiece. They are of mahogany, seven inches thick, carved in bold relief with the most elaborate designs emblematic of death. On one panel a spider, symbolic of the grim destroyer, has caught a fly in a web so delicately executed that you fear to breathe upon it lest it blow away. In another place a griffin's claw supports a human skull, from a fracture in which a lizard seems to crawl. Still another panel shows an owl capturing a mouse, and so on, the intention being to express the idea that death comes soon or late to every living thing. On the top of each coffin is carved a coat of arms, and every available inch of the exterior is beautified by the cutting tools. Inside these superb caskets are swung two silken hammocks, for the eventual reception of the Baron's granddaughter and her spouse. They are not dead yet, be it understood. Quite otherwise. But, having no end of money, they wish to die regardless of expense. A $125,000 mausoleum in a local cemetery will serve as a receptacle for the costly boxes.

Boston, it should be mentioned, is a great depot for undertaker's supplies. The biggest establishment in this line on the continent is situated here, with a huge factory in Cambridge, and a shop at the North End which occupies the whole of an enormous building. One vast floor of the latter is devoted exclusively to burial vestments. Such clothing in thousands of different styles is attractively exposed under half a mile of showcases, varying in expensiveness from the "pauper robes" at $2.50 to the swellest kind of a garment for cemetery wear at $100. These, however, are only "finished at the waist," in the phrase is; in other words, they have no skirts or trousers. Complete suits in all the latest fashions, appropriate to the tomb, are exhibited under glass in doleful array along the four walls of the immense warerooms, while behind partitions of French plate in one corner may be seen a choice assortment of full-dress grave costumes from Paris, draped upon dressmakers' dummies, with busties, corsage bouquets, and all sorts of frills and furbelows, such as are designed in some degree to mitigate the pangs of bereavement. All these beautiful things are samples, made up by the deft fingers of three hundred fair needlewomen. Each girl is employed exclusive y in the manufacture of a single pattern, of which she turns out duplicates at an incredible speed. Some of the dresses made in this way are miracles of intricate embroidery and lace work. The popular burial garment for men is a mournful black coat, with low-cut evening waistcoat, beneath which is tacked a sham shirt bosom of the style know in vulgar parlance as a "dickey." The necktie fastened under the bosom of the dickey is of yellow satin, or some other material not usually worn by live persons who are acquainted with the true mode. Burial clothes for children are made like the things they ordinarily wear, and the fashions, so far as they are concerned, are continually changing.

They do say that there is no end of money in the business of selling undertakers' supplies. The "funeral directors" have an organization among themselves, the object of which is to keep up prices. Each member of this body is sworn to maintain a certain scale of charges, and no person outside of it is permitted to carry on the trade. In other words, there is a stand-and-deliver monopoly of the funeral supply business. The monopoly is maintained tyrannically. The members of the manufacturers' union are guaranteed the exclusive custom of the funeral directors, and thus everything is rendered as lively as possible all around. The profit on undertakers' goods is simply enormous. A coffin $40 brings $200. A "robe" that costs $40 fetches $125. And so it goes.

Certain progressive people here have been making an earnest effort lately to establish a crematory in Boston. So far, however, the enterprise has not proved a howling success. But what shall be done when we conclude that the present method isn't good thing? Since the ancient Egyptians' time the art of embalming has been lost. Doubtless you have seen those wonderful portraits of the great Pharaoh Rameses, who persecuted the Israelites in the time of Moses. When the old gentleman was dug up by Richard Burton two years ago, his body was still in an excellent state of preservation, and his features yet bore the look of majestic pride which marks the countless likenesses of the monarch. And he had been buried thirty-five centuries! Such embalming as is done nowadays is not deserving the name. It is generally supposed that the process employed by contemporary undertakers postpones decomposition after death for an indefinite period. As a matter of fact it doesn't. The stomach and abdominal cavity are filled with some sort of pickling mixture, and that is all.

But the movement toward incineration seems to be making steady progress. There is scarcely a large city that has not its cremation society, and it will not be very long before furnaces are in operation everywhere. The fire has come to stay, and I for one recommend it. For $25 and express charges anybody who wishes to be incinerated may be sent on to Fresh Pond, L. I., and come back in the shape of a neat package of ashes for preservation by his heirs and assigns. The undertakers do not look with a favorable eye on cremation.

The latest thing in caskets is of bamboo wicker work. Its object is to encourage, as far as possible, the processes by which nature reduces the body to its primitive elements. These processes it is the function of the air-tight rosewood box and the new-fangled steel "vault" or outer case to obstruct as much as is practicable.

The morbid dread of being buried alive that is entertained by some nervous people is entirely groundless, so the funeral directors say. The thing is happily impossible, for the simple reason that a person supposed to be a corpse is presumed to be dead, would inevitably be frozen to death in the ice box long before the funeral. There is one readily applied test which the French Academy of Sciences has recently declared infallible as a means of determining whether or not the vital spark is present. If between the lips of a presumed corpse a mirror be held up to the light, no redness is visible, the "subject" is dead beyond peradventure.

Until recently the undertaking industry was represented in the journalistic field by those powerful organs the *Casket* and the *Shroud*, the rival editors of which have lived with one another in the intensity of their professional luxuriousness. On their way about soliciting advertisements they bore the mournful aspect of two gravediggers. The very clothes they wore were made after coffin patterns so folks said, with seams up the back where grave costumes open. He of the *Shroud* affected a visiting card with white scrip on a black ground, but the name of the *Casket* man was printed on a pasteboard tombstone, with a skull and some ribs scattered here and there. It was generally admitted, in fact, that the latter gentleman had the best of his rival in all this point. Editorially, both papers were decidedly solemn. Nothing more frivolous than a paragraph recommending the inexperienced funeral director not to lay in too big a stock of caskets in anticipation of a good season." I quote from a recent number of the *Shroud*—or somebody else may make the remark was admitted to the literary intervals between "ads" setting forth the merits of the "Laughty Coffin Fidgets" and the "Prince of Wales' Grave Embalming Fluid." Such was the old school of undertaking journalism. But a new order of things has lately been started with the publication of a sheet called the *Sunny Side*. Its declared mission is to preach the cheerful aspects of the profession. Funny stories about funerals and such things enliven its pages, with a plentiful seasoning of peculiarly more or less technical scattered here and there—some of them relating to the tomb and such entertaining nonsense ad libitum. At present the old school and the new school are in active opposition.

When be a Beautiful Peace.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

ALBANY, Ga., April 6.—"An aunt of my husband had quite a singular experience," said a lady to-day, who is wintering in Albany. "She was devotedly in love with a young gentleman, but the minister addressed her, she was very religious, and thought that it was her duty to marry the clergyman, who was the rector of the parish. At last she happened to be at a prayer meeting, when the one she loved was called upon to pray. To her surprise he made a long, fervent prayer that—he decided he could do his duty in no other way than to pray for her. She accepted him and asked the clergyman to perform the service. He did so, but no sooner was the knot tied than he turned upon his heel and left, without even congratulating the bride.

PERIL IN THE CIRCUS RING.

HARD WAYS TO EARN A LIVING.

Leaping Not so Safe and Easy as it Looks—The Neck-breaking Triple Somersault—Catapult and Cannon Acts Involve Fearful Dangers—Being a "Brother" Costs Ears—Plucky Mrs. Kabowls.

One of the most lively and picturesque features in a circus performance is "leaping, by the entire company," particularly in an immense show like Barnum & Bailey's, where it is participated in by forty or fifty skilled performers. Running down a long inclined plane and taking a start off the springboard, they, one by one, in rapid succession, dart high in air and far away to land on the thick mattress, where one or two sturdy fellows stand braced to catch them. Over horses they fly, then over camels and elephants, finally over a pyramid of men upon the elephants' backs. It is marvellous what prodigious leaps they make, and so swiftly do they follow each other, that when they get well going the effect is presented of a fountain actively spouting a flood of twisting, writhing, darting bodies and legs, brilliant in all the colors of the rainbow. Two, three, or four men seem to be in the air at once, and each turns one or two somersaults during his flight. The spectators applaud and say, "How pretty!" "How graceful!" and "How easy!" Not one in a hundred says what is most eminently true, "How dangerous." The fact is that all circus men recognize this as one of the most perilous pieces of work they are called upon to perform. Not a season passes in which, in every circus on the road, men are not very seriously injured, and even lamed for life by accidents in doing the high leaps. Sometimes backs are broken, though that is not so frequent as the breaking of legs, and a common thing is the breaking or severe sprdining of an ankle. And there is hardly any other physical mischance that the circus performer dreads so much as an injury to his ankle. It is liable to put an end forever to all his riding, tumbling, acrobatic work, to everything in fact by which he gains his bread. Such star performers as Fish and Dutton require the stipulation in their contracts of engagement that they shall not be required to go on in the "general leaping," even though they may be, as these two men are, among the finest leapers in the profession, and presumably best able to guard themselves against accident. They prefer to save themselves for their equestrian performances, which may be better, and involve risks enough of their own.

The great danger to the leaper is in his somersault. If he is very skilful, he may have a pretty clear idea while he is in the air of where and how he is going to land after a double somersault; but many leapers go through life without ever solving that problem satisfactorily, and of course they are the most frequent sufferers by accidents. Landing on an edge of the thick mattress is exceedingly apt to injure an ankle, and coming down head first is liable to break the neck. But when the adventurous performer essays a triple somersault he never knows how it is going to result. The first man who attempted that feat is said to have been John Aymar, in Batty's circus, in the Isle of Wight. He broke his neck in doing it. It has been successfully performed by several men in this country, but is rarely done, and when it is, does not impress the public sufficiently to make it worth the risk it involves. People fail to appreciate it. They do not know that each somersault following the first in an aerial flight gains one-third in speed over the one preceding, so that by the time the third is turned the performer has not the slightest idea of his position with reference to the earth, and is powerless to save himself. If he does not break his neck, it is simply a lucky accident.

Hiram Franklin, who was one of the best riders and general performers of his day, first did a double somersault from a spring board in this country fifty years ago, in Niblo's Garden, and the first to do it from the ground was Henry Reynolds, in the old Bowery Amphitheatre, in 1844. Now it is a common accomplishment to turn double somersaults, but that is twirling enough for the prudent men in the business. A somewhat varied form of the "leaping act," technically known as the "Spanish Trampoline," which used to be practised in all circuses and is never seen now, was especially dangerous. In that the men sprang from a solid starting point instead of a springboard, and went over horses, the number of which was increased gradually, Tim Turner cleared sixteen horses and Hiram Franklin seventeen. The extreme difficulty of such a leap will be in some measure realized if it is remembered that the men had to find all the impetus for it in their own muscles and their little wiry frames. Having no aid of a springboard to lift them to such a height as enables the somersaults to be made with ease. In the "trampoline" acts they almost touched the horses' backs while turning their somersaults, and at the same time were going forward with cannon-ball-like velocity to clear the next one in the chance. Of course, many men were crippled for life in this act, and happily it seems now to be altogether done away with.

James M. Nixon, who is not only one of the most experienced circus managers in the country, but who used to be a star rider many years ago, when he was young and charming, is decidedly of the opinion that there is quite risk enough in riding in the circus ring to satisfy any man of reasonable fondness for excitement. He says: "There is nothing else so break-necky in the business, and the reason is that the rider is so entirely dependent upon his horse. His own movements may be as precise as those of a machine, but those of the horse constitute an unknown quantity in the problem. When you go up off his back to go through a hoop or leap a banner or turn a somersault, you don't know where he is or where you will find him when you come down. He ought to be right under you all the time, but however well you may have him trained, he is liable to move a little quicker or a little slower the instant he is relieved of your weight, and his aim is imperceptible. The change of gait is what makes to you the difference between a round of applause and a bed in a hospital. Necks have been broken, legs and ribs fractured, joints dislocated, and knee caps smashed innumerable times just because horses did not do exactly what was expected of them."

It seems, however, that some performers, in their ambition to achieve new and startling feats, voluntarily increase those hazards. James Fish originated the complicated intermingling of a somersault and a pirouette, a feat of operation the air turning half around and completely over at the same time, rising from and landing upon, if he had good luck, the bare back of a galloping steed. Of course he risked his neck every time he did it, and in return won the appreciative applause of about one in a hundred of the people who saw him, the others seeing nothing particularly remarkable in the feat. Another famous rider named Sebastian used to turn a somersault from the back of his horse and go through a space barely large enough for his body to pass between the points of keen bowie knives set in the floor. Martin Lowande did the same thing subsequently off a bare-backed horse. Their clothing was cut and their skins were gashed nearly every time they did the act, but beyond that they have thus far escaped serious injury. If the holder of the bowie should make a very slight error in presenting the blade, or if the rider's figure at exactly the proper point, a fatal accident would be the very probable consequence.

One of the most dangerous individual feats ever performed in a circus ring was the "catapult" act, done by Lulu under the Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson management in 1885. It consisted in that the performer laid himself out straight and rigid on a great beam that was poised like a lever with him on the long end, and a great number of strong india rubber strings straining at the other. Then at a signal, a trigger was touched, the power of the springs was released, and Lulu was seen whirling up almost to the roof of the Garden, and, turning a somersault, landed in a net with his eyeglasses still upon his nose. The tension of those springs changed surprisingly in sympathy with scarcely observable changes in the temperature, so that for almost every performance some of them had to be taken off or more put on. One day, just before the doors were opened for the evening performance, Lulu had an impression that he ought to test the machine before risking himself upon it that night. He tried it, and it was so much out of trim that it was useless to take the trouble, since he had been thrown just right in the afternoon, and he could not feel that the temperature in the Garden had changed at all. The impression remained, however, and, at length yielding to it, he called his assistants, set the machine, put on the long of strength equal to his weight—used for the tests—and touched it off. That bag of gravel was hurled clear up into the lantern of the roof, and struck a beam there with such force that it burst. It had been the object catapulted, instead of the bag, it would have killed Lulu. He was a manager, of course, when he made the remark, "Close call," and placidly went to work reducing the number of springs.

The cannon act, as done by Miss Loyal, had the same element of danger that existed in the catapult, those treacherous India rubber springs. She was supposed to be shot from the mouth of the cannon up some twenty-seven feet to a trapeze, where she caught on and did some quite clever business. If the piece set to go off when she did, it did happen to hang fire, the illusion was excellent, and she was shot up with such force that it seemed to her there didn't seem to be much difficulty or any danger in the performance. But had she not held herself as rigid as a log when put into the cannon, her legs would inevitably have been broken when she was fired out; as certainly as Lulu's skull would have been cracked if he had not held it tight against the catapult beam the moment when he was thrown. When she performed in Nixon's Chicago Amphitheatre in 1872, the manager would not permit her to be sent up without making the trapeze easier of access. To the bar he had attached a half dozen stout fellows to hold under her a "Sancho Panza blanket"—which is a large square of strong canvas with grip loops on its edges. Her husband was indignant, swore that the arrangement spoiled the effect of the act, and denounced it as a piece of useless folly. "All the same," replied Nixon firmly, "the blanket goes under her, or she don't go up." For three weeks she performed twice a day and never had an accident, but on the first night of the fourth week the springs failed to throw her within reach of the trapeze and she fell back into the blanket. Had it not been there she would have fallen right back on the mouth of the cannon, and smashed a lot of her ribs.

The introduction of the nets now spread under all aerial performers has reduced to mere seeming the apparent danger of their feats. But it has not been a great while since there were no nets, and life and limb were imperilled at each performance. When Leotard first did the great flying trapeze act, originated by him, he practised it, without any safeguard but at a moderate elevation, in the Toulon gymnasium, and then at his first production of it in the Cirque Napoleon, in Paris, swung his trapezes at such a height that if he had missed his clutch by but a fraction of an inch he would have fallen fifty-five feet to the ground. Doubtless he would have put them still higher if the roof had not been in his way. As they were, the only way he had of getting to his starting perch was by descending a little spiral staircase from the lantern in the dome, to it. No wonder Paris stood aghast at such a performance under such conditions.

A singularly venturesome and dangerous act was done here in the variety theatres a few seasons ago by Mrs. Kabowls, formerly Miss Jackley, one of the famous English family of acrobats bearing that name. She had a nest of ten tables built to "telescope" together, which, when worked up to their full extension limit, elevated her upon the topmost one to a height of thirty-five feet. Standing up there, she would let herself drop backward, as if by accident, turn a somersault in the air, land upon her hands on the edge of the lowest table, and bounding off it alight erect upon the stage. And, furthermore, while in the air on the way down, she would change her costume, alighting in different