JAPANESE FAIRY TALES.

QUAINT OLD STORIES WHOSE AUTHORS ARE NOT KNOWN.

Monkeys, Crabs, and Devils Are Prominent in Them—Jack the Giant Killer—An Explanation of the Jelly Fish's Condition.

The Japanese have a series of fairy tales resembling very closely the Mother Goose and the Tar Baby stories of America. Their authorship is not known. One of them relates to Momotaro, the Japanese Jack the Giant Killer:

Once on a time an old woman was washing clothes in a river. She was leaning over the water when she saw a big peach come tumbling and splashing down the river. She drew it ashore with a piece of bamboo, finished her washing in a hurry, and went home to give the peach to her husband. She was cutting the peach in two, one portion to be for her husband and the other for herself, when

MOMOTARO FOUND IN THE PEACH.

a child jumped out of the kernel. The old couple rejoiced at sight of the boy, and named him Momotaro, or Little Peachling, because he came out of the peach. Momotaro grew big and lusty, and the old couple bestowed great care on his education. In time he excelled everybody in strength, and he then determined to cross over to an island, inhabited by devils, seize their riches, and live in ease.

He started alone for the island. As he left the house his foster mother put some dumplings into his pouch. On the way he met a dog, who agreed to go along and help if Momotaro would give him a dumpling. Soon afterward a monkey

BATTLE OF MOMOTARO AND THE DEVILS.

and a pheasant came along, and offered their services on the same condition. Then all four hurried toward the island. Momotaro and his three followers broke through the gate and found themselves in the midst of a great multitude of devils. Momotaro conquered them all and then had a lively tussle with their chief, Akandojl. Akandojl came at Momotaro with an iron club, but he was crushed and tied with a rope. Then the chief of the devils sued for peace, while the dog and the monkey and the pheasant sat near by. Momotaro made Akandojl give up all his riches, and with these and his three companions, to whom he attributed his easy success, he returned home, where he gave a great feast. Subsequently he became one of the leading citizens, as was proper.

Another story is about a battle between a monkey and a crab. The monkey had a persimmon seed, which he didn't think much of save as a curiosity, and the crab had a nice toasted rice cake. The monkey was hungry and asked the crab to swap. The crab did so and, wise creature that he was, planted the persimmon seed. Soon the seed grew into a high tree. The tree grew big persimmons right away, but the crab couldn't climb the tree to get them, and so he asked the monkey to go up and throw down some. The monkey climbed the tree and began to eat the nice ripe persimmons. The unripe ones he threw on the crab's back, and finally the crab had to take refuge in his hole, where he lay in great pain. When the

THE MONKEY ON THE JELLY FISH'S BACK.

MOMOTARO'S FEAST.

THE MONKEY VISITS THE CRAB.

crab's relatives heard of what the monkey had done they declared war on the monkeys. The monkeys gathered and came forth to battle. The armies met at a stream. The crabs were frightfully beaten, and they retired to their holes to have a council of war.

Then a rice mortar, a pounder, a bee and a egg met and devised a plot for revenge. The bee asked for peace, and requested the king of the monkeys to come and see them about their differences. The monkey king accepted the invitation and seated himself on the hearth. He was stirring the fire with a poker, when bang! went the egg which had secreted itself in the ashes. The monkey's arm was burned, and running to a pickle tub he thrust in his arm, only to be stung by the bee. The monkey went and made for the back door. But he got his legs twisted in some seaweed and slipped. Then the mortar and the pounder tumbled off a shelf and fell on him so hard that they broke his back. The crabs came out with their pinchers and pinched him to death.

One of the best stories is "The Silly Jelly Fish." As translated into English by B. H. Chamberlain for a Japanese publishing house, the story runs as follows:

"Once upon a time the King of the Dragons, who had till then lived as a bachelor, took it into his head to get married. His bride was a

THE DRAGON QUEEN'S ILLNESS.

young Dragonette, just 16 years old, lovely enough, in very sooth, to become the wife of a King. Grandees were the rejoicings on the occasion. The fishes, both great and small, came to pay their respects and to offer gifts to the newly wedded pair; and for some days all was feasting and merriment.

"But, alas! even dragons have their trials. Before a month had passed the young Dragon Queen fell ill. The doctors dosed her with every medicine that was known to them, but all to no purpose. At last they shook their heads, declaring that there was nothing more to be done. The illness must take its course, and she would die. But the sick Queen said to her husband:

"'I know of something that will cure me. Only fetch me the live monkey's liver to eat, and I shall get well at once.'

"'A live monkey's liver?' exclaimed the King. 'What are you thinking of, my dear? Why, you forget that we dragons live in the sea, while monkeys live far away from here, among the forest trees on land. A monkey's liver? Why, darling, you must be mad.'

"Hereupon the Dragon Queen burst into tears. 'I only ask you for one small thing,' whimpered she, 'and you won't get it for me. I always thought that you didn't really love me. Oh, I wish I had stayed at home with my own m-m-m-mamma and my own papa-a-a!' Here her voice choked with sobs and she could say no more.

"Well, of course the Dragon King did not like to have it thought that he was unkind to his beautiful young wife. So he sent for his trusty servant, the Jelly Fish, and said,

"'It is rather a difficult job, but what I want you to try to do is to swim across to the land and persuade a live Monkey to come here with you. In order to make the Monkey willing to come, you can tell him how much nicer everything is here in Dragon Land than away where he lives. But what I really want him for is to cut out his liver and use it as medicine for your young mistress, who, as you know, is dangerously ill.'

"So the Jelly Fish went off on his strange errand. In those days he was just like any other fish, with eyes and fins and a tail. He even had little feet, which made him able to walk on the land as well as to swim in the water. It did not take him many hours to swim across to the country where the Monkeys lived; and, fortunately, there happened to be a fine Monkey skipping about among the branches of the trees near the place where the Jelly Fish landed. So the Jelly Fish said:

"'Mr. Monkey, I have come to tell you of a country far more beautiful than this. It lies beyond the waves, and is called Dragon Land. There is pleasant weather there all the year round, there is always plenty of ripe fruit on the trees, and there are none of those mischievous creatures called Men. If you will come with me I will take you there. Just get on my back.'

"The Monkey thought it would be fun to see a new country. So he leaped on to the Jelly Fish's back, and off they started across the water. But when they had gone about half way he began to fear that perhaps there might be

URASHIMA AND THE SEA PRINCESS.

some hidden danger. It seemed so odd to be fetched suddenly in that way by a stranger. So he said to the Jelly Fish:

"'What made you think of coming for me?'

"'The Jelly Fish answered, 'My Master, the King of the Dragons, wants you in order to cut out your liver and give it as medicine to his wife, the Queen, who is sick.'

"'Oh, that is your little game, is it?' thought the Monkey. But he kept his thoughts to himself, and only said, 'Nothing could please me better than to be of service to their Majesties. But it so happens that I left my liver hanging to a branch of that big chestnut tree which you found me skipping about on. A liver weighs a good deal. So I generally take it out and play without it during the daytime. We must go back for it.' The Jelly Fish agreed that there was nothing else to be done under the circumstances. For, silly creature that he was, he did not see that the Monkey was telling a story in order to avoid getting killed and having his liver used as medicine for the fanciful young Dragon Queen.

"When they reached the shore of Monkey Land again the Monkey bounded off the Jelly Fish's back and up to the topmost branch of the chestnut tree in less than no time. Then he said, 'I do not see my liver here. Perhaps somebody has taken it away. But I will look for it. You, meantime, had better go back and tell your master what has happened. He might be anxious if you did not get home before dark.'

"So the Jelly Fish started off a second time, and when he got home he told the Dragon King everything just as it had happened. But the King flew into a passion with him for his stupidity, and hallooed to his officers, saying 'Away with this fellow. Take him and beat him to a jelly. Don't let a single bone remain unbroken in his body.' So the officers seized him and beat him, as the King had commanded. That is the reason why to this very day jelly fishes have no bones, but are nothing more than a mass of pulp.

"As for the Dragon Queen, when she found she could not have the monkey's liver—why, she made up her mind that the only thing to do was to get well without it."

Another of the fairy tales related to Urashima, who is the Japanese Rip Van Winkle. He married the Sea God's daughter, and, after living with her a few days, came back to his country to find that his few days had been a few hundred years, and that his family name was little more than a myth.

These tales are now published in Japan in English. To an American the books themselves are no less interesting than the tales. The stories are printed in books of fifteen or twenty pages. The paper used is made of wood fibre, and is very similar to thin blotting paper. Only one side is printed on. The covers are of similar paper, and the books are bound with narrow strips of silk, which pass four times through the books and are tied on the front cover in neat little bows. There are excellent illustrations in color on some of the pages, scattered through the pages. In addition to the illustrations the top of some of the pages is set in a most delicately colored border ornamented with flowers and fruits and birds, and with other more fanciful crosslets.

LOOK AT OUR GIRLS!

THEY ARE STUNNERS, AS DESCRIBED IN AN ENGLISH REVIEW.

Growth of Sport Among American Women and Brilliant Results—They Row, Ride, Fence, Swim, and Play Generally with Skill and Bloom Like Peach Blossoms.

From the Fortnightly Review.

The name of American girl was once a popular synonyme for "nerves," ill health, and all the ailments engendered by want of exercise, foolish diet, and irregular habits of life. When contrasted with the English girl, whose outdoor life made her the picture of abounding health and rosy-cheeked energy, she suffered in the comparison.

A generation has sufficed to effect a complete change, and our English cousins no longer hold a monopoly of outdoor sports. Where thirty years ago the girl who went boating and fishing, climbing trees and jumping fences with her brothers, was looked upon as a tom-boy and regarded with severe disapproval, the reverse is now the case. Outdoor life, delight in action, the spirit of sport, have taken hold of American womanhood. Girls of strong, active physique, erect carriage and energetic spirit, delighting in tennis, riding, boating, walking, are now the rule; the feeble, indoor do-nothing is the exception, and the result is a tall, vigorous race, with free step and cheeks aglow with the ruddy color of physical health and energy. Walk along the avenues of New York, Boston, Chicago, or any large city at the fashionable hours, and the procession of bright, animated girlhood which passes before one's eyes gives ample proof of summer activity in the country and city work in gymnasium and riding school.

All over the country, where there are men and money to start a club and create a sporting interest, the women also have their fair share of advantages, and, in not a few cases, their fair share also of work in setting the organizations on foot. There are few country clubs, hunt clubs, tennis clubs, or other sporting clubs throughout the Union which have not a lady membership. Ladies have also their own clubs in connection with the former, like the Berkeley Ladies' Athletic Club of New York, or separate clubs, like the Staten Island Ladies' Club; but these are more confined to the East than spread in general over the country. As a rule, the ladies have their assured place in the men's clubs, or mixed clubs, as they more truthfully are, which are to be found in every quarter of the Union—North, South, East, and West. New York city has its Riding Club, with men and women members, its bowling clubs and tennis clubs, and its Berkeley Ladies' Athletic Club above mentioned—an outgrowth of the men's organization of the same name, and rivalled in Boston by Miss Allen's gymnasium. Brooklyn has its Riding and Driving Club of mixed membership. On Staten Island is the Staten Island Ladies' Club, also the Richmond County Country Club for both men and women. In Philadelphia are the Meadow Brook Country Club, and the Rockaway, at Cedarhurst, both with lady members, and the Ladies' Golf Club at Southampton. There are, besides, the Essex County Country Club in New Jersey, the Westchester Country Club in New York, the Philadelphia Country Club, the Myopia, near Boston, the Morristown Country Club in New Jersey, the many hunt clubs of the East and South—all of which have women as a recognized element in their organizations. In the West, near Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, Cleveland, there are numberless country clubs, where ladies are given recognition and companionship are held dear by them. In Western New York, near Rochester, Buffalo, and Syracuse, are many fine clubs with lady members; in New Orleans is the well-known Southern Athletic Club, also with ladies as members; and in California, near San Francisco, is a large country club which holds tennis championships for women. Lawn tennis certainly holds first place in the hearts of American girls if one may judge from its universality, though it is indeed hard pressed by riding. The racket is far more common than the sunshade in the hands of the American girl, whose summers are one long season of outdoor sport, whether at watering place, seaside resort, or inland village where city visitors mingle with the country families and all meet at the tennis club for morning play and gossip. The result of this widespread patronage of the game is the development of a very high class of play among American women.

Fencing has of late made rapid strides in feminine favor, and is at present the reigning fad in New York society. While the ranks of our women fencers are principally swelled by the ordinary, mediocre devotees to the fashionable craze of the moment, there are many who have attained a really high degree of skill and science in the art, and (to quote one of the fencing masters) there are some who are quite capable of fencing with any man, however expert, without having favors shown them because they are women.

As for riding, I said that it follows hard upon tennis in popular favor. The riding school is as necessary a part of a girl's education as the dancing school. The American girl does not live in the saddle to the extent that her English cousin does, but she is thoroughly at home there, and rides with a grace, an abandon, and a fearlessness which lend witchery to her rides into one creature moved by a common impulse and a common thought. America has a great many noted horsewomen among her women of wealth and fashion who own fine mounts, and are thoroughly in touch with the sensitive intricacies of horse nature.

In New York, especially, there is a great deal of attention paid to riding, the knowledge of which is de rigueur among the girls of the highest circles. To learn to ride is a necessary part of every New York girl's early training. The consequence is that New York girls of family and position have developed into a set of finished horsewomen, noted for their beautiful seat, graceful bearing, and correct style.

In the South, riding among women is very general; it is, in fact, almost the only kind of sport in which Southern women indulge. They are born riders, and come nearest the English in that everyday life in the saddle which is characteristic of England. But they do not pay so much attention to dress as the Northern women; they are less strict as to the details of style and form; nor do they look upon riding as a sport in itself so much as a means of getting about in alternation with driving. A Southerner rides a score ride as a drive to where he has either business or pleasure, while the Northerner considers the riding itself a sufficient object, and is not so apt to use it as a means.

Space forbids my making more than a brief reference to riding in the West. There the women are like the Southern women—live more in the saddle than those in the East, and are apt to be more daring and impetuous riders. They are expert at mountain climbing, and on the prairies they turn out in full force at those rousing jack-rabbit hunts, which rival the fox hunt in excitement and sport, and require no less skill and science to bring the quarry down. No woman who can sit in the saddle is absent when such a hunt starts from army post or frontier town and scours over the plains after the "jack," who takes twenty feet at a bound and often succeeds in outwitting the most cunning and experienced hounds. This is a very exciting and spirit-stirring sport in the teeth of a bracing Western wind which is decidedly enjoyable. Eastern women also become expert in this sport and miss it sadly on their return to the East. Riding is very general in all sections of the country.

Apart from the actual riding, the women are quite as largely concerned in the hunts as the men. Many follow on foot, and enter quite as enthusiastically into the spirit of the sport. The social events connected with the hunts—the meets, the breakfasts, dinners, and balls—collect all the well-known women of society and fashion, and are among the delightful most cherished aspirations. The wealthy people who have country seats in a hunting neighborhood throw open their doors during the hunting season, and contribute much to the general gayety. A large number of women attend the meets on horseback who do not follow the hounds, and in this way the art of riding is further promoted.

The New York Horse Show has also a tale to tell. The great increase of ladies' hunters, most of them entered by private owners, and the high degree of breeding they have attained, go far to prove the great advance toward excellence and universality which the art of riding has made among American women, who not only care for riding, but also care what kind of a horse they ride, and thus give evidence of greater critical knowledge and more fastidious requirements.

I have been betrayed into giving the greater part of my space to tennis and riding, but these are not the only sports which are entitled to rate if practised by American girls. Bowling, swimming, boating, skating, tobogganing, snowshoeing, are all widely popular and have their share of attention.

Bowling has penetrated into city life, and we find bowling clubs vying with afternoon teas among the social events of the year, especially during Lent, when other amusements fall off. Handsome prizes for both gentlemen and ladies are presented by the matrons, and the play is carried on in tournament style. In the country bowling alleys are usually adjuncts of the tennis club, and are much used.

In city and country alike women indulge very generally in skating, and the first ice is crowded with a throng of graceful skaters. Any country girl would be ashamed not to skate, and city girls make up pleasant parties for a trip to some suburban pond, or open their country houses for a festival party. But there are no organized clubs; everything is done in an informal way.

Tobogganing and snowshoeing have also been introduced from the West and from Canada, the former especially being in great favor at one time as a form of fashionable amusement. The Essex County Country Club had a slide which was much patronized. Snowshoeing is more confined to the girls who live all the year round in the country, as it takes a great deal of practice to become proficient in it. In the colder Northwestern States especially, these winter sports have a wide development. Around St. Paul, Minn., for instance, snowshoeing is almost much in vogue as a diversion for merry parties of young people.

In aquatics American girls are also proficient. Rowing is a very common form of amusement, and there are few girls living near water who do not know how to manage oars and paddle. The women's colleges and the large private boarding schools keep boats and encourage rowing and swimming. Many have regular crews, and row annual races with each other and with scratch crews of the neighborhood, and they row very well, too, in true 'varsity style. Wellesley College, near Boston, pays special attention to her crew, and has ventured on sliding seats. The style worn is loose blouses, short skirts, and knickerbockers. The summer watering places likewise get up races for girls, which are one of the chief amusements of the season.

Women also do a great deal of yachting, as attested by the large number of women on the American Yacht Register who own yachts and sail them themselves. All along the shore are small clubs, and girls may be seen any day darting hither and thither in small catboats and "fore-and-afts," and showing considerable skill in their management. In the matter of larger craft, too, they are by no means backward. Though ladies are not very generally admitted to our larger yacht clubs, there are clubs in Boston of which they are yacht-owning members with the right to fly the colors; and the New York Yacht Club is now discussing the question of the admission of women.

American girls are very "keen" about canoeing and are skilful at it—indeed, they are most expert, and often reckless paddlers, shooting rapids and even taking to the sailing canoe, a very ticklish business even for a man. They go out in bathing costume, and are not a bit disturbed by an occasional ducking. The sport is equally in vogue on quiet country streams, where the canoe glides silently along between steep banks of fern and meadow grass, alder bushes, and wild swamp growths, all mirrored in the clear surface. There are no women's clubs for canoeing, but the men's canoe clubs admit women as members.

Canoeing implies swimming, of course, and many women are at home in the water. The gymnasiums have swimming classes, besides which there are many nice swimming schools where girls are taught to swim. It is quite an ordinary accomplishment, but not so common as some others.

In the cycling world there are, according to the last report, no less than thirty thousand women who own and ride bicycles. There are cycling clubs everywhere for women, and a large portion of the men's clubs are open to them. Most of these clubs are small affairs, however, with few of the appointments of a club house beyond a small building for the meetings and a shed for the wheels. In the cities they are more elaborate, but there are far too many to mention in detail. Cycling, in fact, is the amusement par excellence of the people, and is not taken up as a regular sport by the upper classes. The cycling set is by no means the same as that engaged in tennis, riding, and other sports. It is essentially popular—the principal form of outing of the vast majority of the middle classes, the smaller shopkeepers, tradesmen, mechanics, clerks. This applies to both men and women. I do not mean that the upper classes do not ride a cycle; it would be absurd to say so; but they are too few to give their stamp to cycling. The women, especially of the upper classes, if they cycle at all, are not apt to use their wheels in public.

There are plenty of cycling newspapers with women's departments, but the cycling interest is so evenly divided between men and women that the latter read the body of the paper with as much interest as the former. I know of no cycling papers for women only.

Racing has taken place among women cyclists, but it is a great novelty, and is discountenanced by the women themselves. Neither is the "rational costume" much in fashion.

Golf has not become a favorite in America, and is still taken up more or less as a fad among the fashionable people. There is a good deal of golfing done at Newport, where the gay set have made a purchase of ground for a club house, polo field, and links. The ladies now play on the men's links, but will soon have one of their own. Here golf is entirely a society affair. The game is really only about two or three years old with us; it was started as a more serious sport at Yonkers, on the Hudson, a half hour by rail from New York. Here a links was laid out and called the "St. Andrews" in honor of the Mecca of all true golfers. Though intended for men, this link is now used by women also, as it is at Newport. At Southampton, Long Island, there is a Ladies' Golf Club, and golfing is in high favor. Golf has also been taken up by the Meadow Brook Country Club, which has a very good links. Women there go in for it very largely, and use the men's links. There is also some talk of a links on Staten Island. Golf is quite a favorite in California, but in general its vogue is very local, and shows little indication of spreading, much less of superseding tennis.

Such is the general aspect of women's sport on the American side of the Atlantic. The field is far too large for satisfactory treatment within the limits of one article, which can only give a brief outline of the most important lines of development. In conclusion, let me say that with all this widespread interest in sports, there is no tendency among American women to become "sporty." There are fast sets where this is the case, but the American girl, taking her all in all, does not devote her time and energy to sport so much as to smack of the stable and the field. She is kept in balance by too many other things that occupy and interest her, and instead of serving the ends of sport she makes sport serve the ends of physical health and well-developed womanhood. ELIZABETH CYNTHIA BARNEY.

WRITTEN BY PRISONERS.

Sentiments Inscribed on the Walls of the General Sessions Court Pens.

The inscriptions on the walls of the pens in Parts I. and III. of the Court of General Sessions indicate that the criminals confined there are generally in a meditative mood. The pen in part III. is a dingy affair ten feet square, with rough benches and heavy wooden walls. The walls are grimy, and where not covered with inscriptions are cut and hacked by prisoners who managed to conceal knives in their clothes, notwithstanding searches in the police stations and the jails. Besides the writing, which is mostly in lead pencil, there are innumerable crude sketches. One shows a huge schooner of beer with froth flowing over the top, and evidently represented the desire of the artist.

Crooks seem to take a pride in writing their autographs on the walls and leaving their records for the edification of other criminals. Victor Aron and Benjamin Mindel have their autographs on the wall with "Burglary, first degree, nine years ten months, May 11, 1892," following them. A sketch of a very fat policeman appears above the autograph of Thomas Lally, burglar. Jacob Hoffman seems to have rejoiced in the alias of "The Handshaker" for he includes it in his autograph, and adds "Five years. Sing Sing." Messrs. Cody and Murphy, convicted of assault in the second degree and sentenced to the Elmira Reformatory, wrote their names and destination in half a dozen different places. Philip Cassidy, burglar, informs inmates of the pen that he, too, has gone to Elmira for five years. Red Rooney is content with leaving just his name, while L. Menger says he got "10 yers in the pen," which is interpreted as meaning two years in the penitentiary. One criminal wrote, "District Attorney Townsend is an actor. He is all right."

A prisoner who signed himself Chock Rilley made this remark:

The gods who know it all
Will see this handwriting on the wall.

Another prisoner with a long term in Sing Sing before him wrote: "Sing Sing prison, 33 years. God help us." A wit inscribed this: "George Washington, 99 years 10 months 13 days and 1 hour." "Harry Clarke, 16 years of age," has "5 years from May 1, 1894," underneath it. Another humorist writes: "Jack the Ripper, 6 months in a pie wagon, and Jimmie the Lush, 3 months in a brewery." The name "Biff Ellison," with "5 years" written after it, is in a scrawling hand, quite unlike the chirography of that worthy.

The pen in Part I. is lined with sheet iron, painted a dirty yellow, and the inscriptions cannot be read so well as those in the other pen. One prisoner wrote: "It's a long lane that has no turn," and added, "My first drunk since Jan. '89; two fingers and a thumb," which probably refers to the amount of liquor required for the effect of intoxication which got him into trouble. Another was in a poetic strain when he wrote:

On my prison way I have printed these words:
I had friends.
I was free.
But now they go
Back on me.
I had friends once.
But enemies now,
We were friends once,
But strangers now.
I gaze on them from dawn in the morning till the shades of night.

One criminal, apparently not a Chinaman, although he signed himself "Ching Wah Lung," makes the following hopeless offer:

Who will get me out of trouble? Whoever will, I shall some day do them a good turn. Yours truly.

"Grimes, Burglar," is the plain autograph of that personage, while Luke McGluke and Tug Stanton simply inscribe their names. Tom Mosely, who got "four years for a watch worth $10," says: "I will remember this place as long as I live, and don't you forget it."

A French criminal writes: "Vive la belle France." There is a friendly tip from one criminal to his fellows in the following: "Anyone who has a chance to go to Elmira, don't kick, for he'll get a damn sight worse."

George Walker writes that he "will remember this place as a hell on earth for himself and William Geary."

His Dead Sore Rheumatism Cure.

From the Daily Kennebec Journal.

A Lewiston undertaker tells the following story about his being startled out of a two months' attack of rheumatism:

"A body had been brought into my rooms from the river, where it had been two days, and after locking the doors and lighting a lamp—it was late at night—I commenced to prepare the remains for burial. The body, that of a strong, rugged man—supposed to have been a tramp—was lying upon my embalming table, and in doing it I raised one arm in the air, and tied the hand by a string from the ceiling. I dropped a pair of scissors on the floor, and was stooping slowly to pick them up when I received a staggering blow on the head, and at the same time felt the cold hand of the dead fall off my head and strike the lamp, putting it out and leaving me in total darkness. I had not taken a lively step for weeks, but I can assure you that I moved out of that dark room in a hurry, and did not go there again till daylight. And I have not suffered from rheumatism since that night. I found that the cold hand had turned off the string so that the arm fell, striking me."

LETTERS SUICIDES LEAVE.

A QUEER COLLECTION OF REASONS FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION

Things Which Make Men Think Nothing in the Hereafter Can Be Worse Than What They Endure Here—Women Seldom Write

Persons whose business or inclination has placed them in a position to become familiar with the subject of self-destruction find an interesting study in the letters written just before the writer committed suicide. It is a curious fact that although the persons intending to make away with themselves realize that they have only a few minutes or hours to live, their last message is usually written in an off-hand manner, as though the writer was engaged in an ordinary, every-day business transaction. It is an exception when the character of the letter denotes nervousness on the part of the writer. Said a well-known physician of this city, whose experience with suicides has extended over a score of years:

"It is a surprising thing, the matter-of-fact way in which the unfortunate person dashes off his last message on earth. It is as though he sat down, pen in hand, with the inward comment, 'Well, after mature deliberation I have decided to make away with myself, and I owe it to humanity to leave a parting line behind me, so here goes.'"

Sometimes, however, the writer goes about his work in a more serious vein. He appears to have weighed the question carefully. He sits down and without a tremor carefully puts his few last thoughts or wishes on paper.

"I have tried to look on the bright side" he writes, "but my life has been a failure, and I have not the courage to begin over again."

Then he calmly folds up the letter, puts it in a prominent place, and kills himself.

There are some instances where the person contemplating suicide has left a letter apologizing for the trouble he is making. One man, before shooting himself, carefully removed the rug from the floor of his room.

"In putting myself out of the way," he wrote, "I desire to make as little muss as possible. You will have the trouble of laying this rug again, but it is too expensive a one to soil."

Chief Clerk Reynolds of the Coroners' office tells the story of a man who sent a note to the office in which he said that if the Coroner would send him the necessary car fare he would make away with himself in that official's apartments.

"It will save you a lot of trouble," he went on, "for my body will be convenient."

"We get all sorts of letters among the suicides' effects," said Mr. Reynolds, "some of which are written with great care, while others are a mere scrawl, as though the writer was in a hurry to get it over with. It is a noticeable fact that very few women who intend to commit suicide leave any writing behind them. The letters are almost always written by men. Women usually try to destroy all proof which will lead to an identification of their body."

Often the letters left by a person who has committed suicide are pathetic. A few months ago the body of a man who had shot himself through the head was found lying in a clump of bushes near Hudson, N. Y. The body had been exposed to the elements for a long time, and was little more than a skeleton. Clutched in one of the bony hands was a slip of paper upon which was written the single sentence:

"Please buy me a grave."

Another letter, found on the unidentified body of a man who committed suicide, said:

"I cannot give my name, else my old mother would know how I died. Please bury me like an honest man. In my pocket you will find $40."

Cornice Maker Jean Schwarz drowned himself in the Croton reservoir in order that his starving wife and child might get the insurance money on his life. On the day he committed suicide he sent his wife a farewell letter. After telling her how she could get the insurance money he begged her forgiveness. The letter ended with a prayer that what he was about to do might keep her from want.

Many letters left by suicides declare that the writers die because they have been disappointed in love. In a good many instances the letters are written to friends, and the name of the faithless one is not given. Pierre Brady, a young Frenchman, who came to this city from Philadelphia, committed suicide in his room at the St. Amy Hotel. During the afternoon of the day on which he killed himself he went to the Hotel Martin and wrote two letters. Each was addressed to "Madame." In one the writer said: "When I first knew you, you had just been married, and I wished that I had been that happy man." In the other, on a confession hopeless love for "Madame," and bewailed the cruel misfortune that had come into his life. There were hints that the writer would be driven to self-destruction because of his hopeless love. The second letter read:

"Madame: My last thoughts are of you. At the moment of quitting this world I say to you a fond adieu."

It was ascertained that Brady had been in love with the French actress, Jane Hading.

Adolph Labor of White Plains shot himself in a room at the Hotel Arthur. This letter was found near the body:

"I am better off dead than alive, and I will take a ball. Tell my mother to take it easy. There is a mat in my trunk I made for mother. Do not take it to heart. I am better off this earth. Mother, Kate Tobin is the fault of my death."

Miss Tobin had refused to marry Labor because of his intemperate habits.

Frederick Koch, a clerk 18 years old, shot himself in the store. He wrote a letter explaining his action while riding in the elevated train between 106th street and Forty-seventh street. He said that his stepfather and stepmother had slandered him to the girl he loved. It ends:

"I expect to end my life with Sam's pistol or knife, which I will try to get some way or other. Good-by to all, and my darling, angel Annie, whom I intended to make my wife some day."

William M. Lord, a waiter, who lived in Jersey City, came to a Bowery lodging room at the Shelbourne House, where he made elaborate plans for committing suicide. He wrote this note and placed it together with a faded flower in an envelope addressed to Mrs. Kate Murphy:

"SISTER KATIE: If you only knew how I feel and all I went through you would pity me. If ever you see my dear friend, John Fordham, again, do all you can to get him to go back to his father and be a good boy. Be good to him, Katie, if he comes to look at me when I am dead. Speak kindly to him for my sake. May God bless you all this night. Keep this bit of flower for me, as I will be with you I guess. I will have very little flowers at my burial. Good-by, Katie, do all you can for John, and God will help you I am sure. Your poor brother,

"WILLIAM M. LORD."

After writing the letter Lord lay down on the bed and took a dose of Paris green. Then he jumped up, rang the bell violently, and shouted for an ambulance. He was taken to Bellevue Hospital and recovered.

On March 12 this letter was received at the Coroners' office:

"My wife is killing me. She is doing it purposely. In fact, her vicious temper, combined with an equally vicious tongue, would drive anybody to suicide. Five female relatives of my wife, living in the neighborhood, are, and have been, doing their best to make matters worse. My wife is a devil; she is driving me to death. Because of her I will commit suicide in a short time.

"ADOLPH DICK, 101 Suffolk street.

"In my case marriage has been a decided failure. A. D."

On March 13 Dick went home and drank some diluted carbolic acid. He was taken to Bellevue Hospital under arrest.

Many persons who commit suicide leave letters which show that they were cranks of one kind or another. The body of a man was found in the East River. On his person was found a bulky manuscript containing a history of his life. The writer said that he had been chased all over the world by a band of invisible enemies, who got every one down on him by telling wicked stories about his personal life. Finally he had decided that the best way out of it was to commit suicide.

Another man left a letter saying that he had accidentally swallowed some dynamite and preferred the certainty of death by poison to the continual risk of being blown up the first time any one ran into him. The unidentified body of a man was found hanging from a tree near Tarrytown. In his pocket was a letter which read: "Every night I am visited by the angels. I am told that there is a harp ready for me when I die, only I don't know how to play the harp. As no one will kill me, I guess I'll have to do it myself or some one else will get my harp."

A few months ago the body of an Italian was found in Central Park. Over $600 in money was found on his person. He left a letter written in a beautiful hand, in which he spoke of the green hills of Italy and the regret that he would never see them again. Then there was a discourse on death, which ended:

"The shade of the cypress behind the urns of the dead will soothe me and render less terrible the dream of death."

The body was never identified.

A majority of the letters are written by persons who commit suicide because they have been in trouble. Antoine Malaussena, who had been a soldier in the French army, killed himself by jumping from the roof of his house into the street. He left this letter:

"The only motive for my act is this: In August, 1890, I was selected as a sharpshooter for the shooting matches at Lyons, given by the 106th Territorial Regiment. To this end our Colonel made us practise twice a day. We each used forty-five cartridges at each shoot, and the shock of the discharge of my gun brought about a noise in my ears which made me suffer night and day. Long ago I wanted to kill myself, but because of father, my little sister, and Felix, I was restrained from my purpose."

Another Frenchman, Joseph Arnoux, left this:

"DEAR FRIEND: I kill myself because this life is too hard for me. I have too much trouble. Pardon me. I tell you good-by. I go to the other land, where I expect to have better luck."

Theodore Burckner, a German painter, shot himself at Newtown, L. I. His letter said:

"I hereby notify you that I, Theodore Burckner, have taken my life, disgusted with life. Inability to obtain employment and lameness of the right arm are the causes."

Joseph Bernhardt of 1,678 Third avenue shot himself. He wrote: "I am a soldier. I am going to die like a soldier, and I want to be cremated. No flowers. This world is full of trouble, trouble."

Michael Curtis hanged himself in his woodshed for this reason:

"I, being a sufferer from hypnotic torture, take this method of getting rid of it. The undersigned believing himself to have been hypnotized by some people, either near Fourteenth street and Fourth avenue or Fifty-ninth street and Ninth avenue, southeast corner, writes this in case they drive me insane. The headquarters of hypnotism in this city are at 14 and 16 Fourth avenue. M. F. CURTIS."

The building Curtis specified is occupied by the Salvation Army.

Some of the suicides leave letters in which they explain that no one is to be blamed for their death.

Marcello P. Delgardes, a Spaniard, who took morphine, wrote:

"Let no one be suspected or blamed for my death. It is my own voluntary act. I poisoned myself with morphine."

J. B. Moorhead, who shot himself in a room at 50 West Thirty-fifth street, left this note:

"Coroner, New York City—Dear Sir: I have committed suicide, as per club. Please give verdict to such effect, and oblige, yours truly,

"J. B. M."

It was said that Moorhead belonged to a suicide club, but Superintendent Byrnes, who made a careful investigation, came to the conclusion that there was no such club.

A few days ago Henry Dahme, a wood carver, shot and killed his wife and then himself at his home in Chicago. The police found this letter in the house:

"We, the undersigned, had personally agreed to die together, as my wife and myself are sickly and ailing, and other differences, arising from all sources, we had agreed to take the last resort, and bury us side by side, as we wish to be laid side by side."

"Of course, the great majority of suicides leave no letters explaining their action," said Mr. Reynolds. "About one in ten or a dozen does so. When the letters are brought to the Coroners' office we deliver them to the friends if they are addressed. If not, they go to the Board of Health with the death certificate or are filed away."

KANSAS'S MENNONITE COLONIES.

Russian Immigrants Who Are Industrious, Prosperous, and Good Farmers.

NEWTON, Kan., Aug. 18.—The leaders of the Mennonite colony near this city and of the one in western Kansas are anxious to have the public understand that they have no part in the numerous emigrations from this State to Russia. The thousands of Russians now returning home are all of the class known as peasants, and they never were friendly toward the Mennonites. In fact, the peasants frequently assisted in the persecution of the Mennonites until the latter were practically exiled from their homes in southern Russia. The Mennonites say that these peasants never were successful or even fairly prosperous in Russia, and few if any of them would ever become good citizens of the State were they to stay. The Mennonites do not conceal their satisfaction at seeing the peasants return to their old Russian homes.

Kansas now has two well-established Mennonite colonies. The older was established in 1870 and settled two years later, and embraces a fine tract in the northern part of Harvey county and the southern part of McPherson county. The other colony is near Hays City, in Ellis county, where the Mennonites have over 100,000 acres of the finest land in that section. They were driven out of Russia a few years ago, and could not find a suitable tract of land for their colonization plan without going out into what is generally termed the arid district of the State. The two colonies are very friendly and are closely allied in all their interests and undertakings. The old colony, a few years ago, began the erection in this city of a college, and while the western colony was too poor to assist very materially in the work, each member did something to show a personal interest in the institution.

The members of the first colony refused to become citizens for several years, until they became fully satisfied that the Government would respect their religious scruples against bearing arms. They still refuse to vote except at school elections. They are totally indifferent as to what political party controls the Government so long as they are sure the country will escape all kinds and forms of war.

They brought with them from their Russian homes many of their strange customs. They brought all their household utensils and their personal belongings, and while most of them now have roomy, comfortable houses, they cling tenaciously to all their queer traps. Their old costumes of skins are carefully preserved and are not worn except on special occasions. Their first houses were built with double doors, but they have dropped that style. They cling to their old style bake ovens, and have baking day once a week as in the old country.

While the ordinary Kansas farmer struggles along, dividing his time between running the farm and running to the country, and dividing his cash between the tax gatherer and the interest collector, the Mennonite quietly pursues the even tenor of his way. He ploughs to plant, plants to grow a crop, and is seldom disappointed, and when the crop is harvested he pays his taxes with what other farmers allow to go to waste. In this city to-day over one-half of the deposits in the banks are owned by these thrifty Mennonites. They are happy in the thought that they owe no man a dollar. It is part of their creed never to buy anything for which they have not the cash to pay. Merchants say that the Mennonite is their best customer.

One element of their success is their system of diversified farming. When the chinch bug cuts the corn crop short, they have a good crop of wheat. If cholera kills some of their hogs, they have