

ARAGO'S DILEMMA.

Composed of a Cotton Night-cap Filled With Double-Barreled Snores.

Arago, the great French scientist, was never seen with a decoration on his breast. He valued honors slightly. One evening I overtook the astronomer, called on him on his way to dine with a minister. He expressed a wish to appear decorated with an order to which he was entitled, having received the official notice of the honor, although he had not as yet the decoration itself.

"Open that drawer," said Arago, "and take whatever you want."

In that drawer were all the crosses and ribbons which kings and emperors confer.

While Arago wished above everything to promulgate science and to make his researches useful he did not attempt to identify himself forever with his discoveries by writing books. He had no time for writing, but contented himself with noting the results of his work in the record of the bureau of longitude or announcing it verbally to the academy.

But this distinguished man dreamed nothing more than seeming ridiculous. He was careful of his dignity even with his most intimate friends.

Erasmus de Mirecourt gives an amusing account of Arago's mortification at having to share a room with his friend, M. Goussier, director of the Bureau's observatory, says the Youth's Companion.

They were at Louvain. When it came to the best accommodation that could be given them was one room with two beds. Arago seemed much disturbed. When they went to bed he pulled the floor impatiently, while the Belgian astronomer walked in his usual manner and danced and prepared for bed.

Erasmus de Mirecourt seemed to form a comparison between the two. He exclaimed, "What a test you are dear friend! But it is impossible for me to sleep unless I have on my head—"

"What?"

"A cotton nightcap."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I have my own habit," replied Arago, "to sleep with my hands over my head."

"Do you think so?" said Arago, with a sigh of relief. "But that is not all. When I sleep—"

"What?"

"I sleep."

"Ah, so do I. I make as much noise as a pipe organ," returned the Belgian.

"Oh, well, then, that is different," said Arago, much consoled. "Let us go to bed."

TURNING TO BONE.

A Poor Woman Who is Afflicted With a Rare and Awful Disease.

Mrs. Mollie Hughes, a highly respected widow lady, living near Cameronville, Idaho, is afflicted with a unique and most distressing disease, says the St. Louis Republic. Little by little the flesh of her entire body is turning to solid bone, or, in other words, she is becoming ossified. The disease was first noted in 1886, when Mrs. Hughes was Mrs. Duchink of Canon Rapids. At that time only a single finger was affected. Within a month after the time when Mrs. Duchink first noticed the numbness and stiffness of the finger it had been accidentally broken off while she was asleep. The incident gave the girl no pain, there being neither blood, nerves or flesh left in the diseased member, but it excited the alarm of the family, who called in a physician. The broken stump of the finger was amputated back to where the living flesh set on and everything was thought to be all right. Soon the flesh, muscles, arteries, veins and nerves on her hands, fingers and arms became as hard and feebly as it was broken off. Next the awful malady extended to her elbows, the forearms becoming as white and as clear as alabaster. Within the year the toes and the end of the nose and ear tips showed a like color and rigidity. The process of ossification has now been going on nearly five years, and the attending physicians say that it is only a matter of time when the entire body of the poor victim will be solid bone. It is a rare disease, and the pathology of it is little understood.

Origin of the Menu.

A German gastronomic publication gives the following account of the origin of the menu: At the meeting of electors in Regensburg in the year 1889 Elector Henry, of Brandenburg, attracted general notice at a state dinner. He had a long paper before him to which he referred every time before he ordered a dish. The elector of Montfort, who sat near him, asked him what he was reading. The elector silently handed the paper to his interrogator. It contained a list of the vands prepared for the occasion, which the elector had ordered the cook to write out for him. The idea of having such a list pleased the illustrious assembly that they introduced it each in his own household, and since that time the fashion of having a menu has spread all over the civilized world.

In Tunis.

Many ladies who get confused in the process of cross-examination would envy the etiquette which prevails in Tunis. A princess who was recently proceeded against by two negroes in her employ, was allowed to give her evidence from the concealment of a curtain partition. Whether this arrangement gave her the requisite presence of mind, or whether from the inherent strength of her case, she certainly won the verdict. We do not learn that the negroes were accorded the same privilege, which might have been an advantage to them.

THE PRAISE OF BLIND PIGS.

A Strange Tale Told by Eva Carson in Harper's Young People.

There was a bear who danced for a living. He did not adopt this occupation from choice, but from necessity, and because his master carried a strong whip, and had a quick arm.

But he was a conscientious bear, and anxious to do his best, although it was not the sort of work he preferred. He danced carefully, and practised his steps along the road, when he travelled beside his master from town to town.

One day executing a new waltz as he went, he passed a monkey, who sat on the topmost rail of a fence, and surveyed the bear's performance with a quiet smile.

"What do you think of my dancing, sir?" asked the bear, wishing to hear the opinion of one who had a reputation for wit and wisdom.

"It is bad enough," replied the monkey. "You are a tremendously clumsy fellow. But you have a certain heavy style of your own, and may improve if you apply yourself long enough."

His remarks saddened the bear, but did not prevent his still trying painfully to make his steps correctly.

Presently he came to a couple of pigs, half blind, who lay dozing in the sunshine beside the road.

"What do you think of my dancing?" asked the bear. He was foolish enough to ask everyone the same question.

"Beautiful! Exquisite!" cried one pig, without opening her eyes.

"Such enchanting grace such a lovely figure, such perfect time!" grunted the other. "Beautiful! beautiful!" and they both fell asleep again immediately.

Then the bear, suddenly seeing what a simoleon he was sat down and groaned, hiding his nose in his paw.

"Now what do you mean?" cried his master wrathfully raising his whip. "Get up, and go on with your steps. Is that approval enough? What more do you expect? Dance again, that you may have more praise."

"Master," wept the humiliated bear, "I can never dance again. The monkey's criticism worried me, but he knew what he was talking about, and I still had hopes of doing better. But when I have fallen so low as to be treated to fulsome praise from blind pigs—I see my case is hopeless, and that as a dancer I never shall succeed."

Extraordinary Jumping Feats.

The jumping and pole-vaulting feats of our contemporary athletes seem but the work of babies and pygmies when compared with the extraordinary doings of the old-time acrobats. If history is to be believed Phylus of Crotona could stand and make a fifty-six foot jump on the dead level. He was one of the main athletes at the Olympic games, his enormous jump forming a part of the course of the Pentathlon. Strutt the noted English authority on games and amusements, speaks of a York-hire jumper named Ireland whose powers were something marvellous. He was 6 feet high at the age of 18, at which time, without the aid of springs or spring-board, he leaped over nine horses ranged side by side, and another time lightly cleared a heavy wagon which was covered with an awning. Colonel Ironsides, who made a voyage from England to India, early in the present century, relates that he met in his travels an old white-haired man, who with a single bound cleared the back of an enormous elephant, flanked on either side with six camels of the largest breed. A book entitled "History of Wonders Performed at Fairs," mentions an Englishman who, at the Fair of St. German, in 1774, leaped over the heads of forty people without touching one of them.

Too Quick For Him.

The only man who ever was too quick for Joe Dye, the bad man of Ventura, was Petroleum Scott, the old Ventura oil man, a tall, wiry, nervous chap, who would be the terror of stenographers if he were a public speaker. Phillips Brooks is a leisured dandy compared to Scott. Scott and Dye had a legal contest over an oil-claim on the Sessa, and, while the case was pending, Scott prudently avoided discussing it with Joe, whose temper and trigger-finger were notoriously quick and apt to act in concert. One day, Scott and Dye met in a Santa Paula saloon, and, sitting down at a table together, clicked glasses and chatted about things in general. Scott carefully abstained from talking about oil-claims, but Joe finally broached the subject and made some statement about the records that was not correct. This is the way Scott tells the story: "Without thinking, I said, 'Joe, you're a damn liar,' and as soon as the words were out of my mouth, he yanked out his revolver and stuck it under my nose. But I was too quick for him. I took it all back before he could shoot."

A Strange Bird.

A strange bird, which has attracted the attention of hundreds of people, has been on exhibition on the farm of John Rodabaugh, a farmer living near St. Mary's, Ohio. The bird resembles an owl very much in form, has a head shaped like a heart, the face of a monkey, a snowy white fur adorning its face, while the feathers are of a beautiful and delicate yellowish gray, with the tail of a turkey. The bird was caught a few weeks ago when he was seen near a turkey. The bird was taken home from church, and not until it had received a load of shot did it allow itself to be taken captive, and then its captor was fearfully lacerated in the fight that ensued. It utters a noise similar to that of the squeal of a pig, and is fed wholly on small birds, which it takes into its beak alive, throwing out the bones and feathers afterward.

The Photograph Anticipated.

In Fenelon's "Fables," written in 1690, may be found an interesting chapter, entitled "Voyage Suppose." Of the marvels related in that story we read: "There was no painter in that country, but when they wished the portrait of a friend, they put water into large basins of gold and silver and made this water to face the object they wished to paint. Soon the water would congeal and become as the face of a mirror, where the image dwelt ineffaceably. This could be carried wherever one pleased, always giving as faithful a picture as a mirror."

Who will say that Fenelon did not anticipate the photograph?

WITH AN IRON THROAT.

This Man Would Defy the Stranger or the Hangman.

One of the best known members of a local athletic club is known as 'the man with an iron throat.' Not that it is iron clad but because no amount of pressure that has yet been applied to that portion of his anatomy has been sufficient to strangle him or stop his breathing.

There was a jolly party of gentlemen in an uptown cafe the other night. During a lull in the conversation the iron throated man made this remark:

"I think that I have the most remarkable throat in the world. I have given you one illustration of it and I am now ready to exhibit another. I would like to have some gentleman with a strong grip—the stronger the better—to try to choke me in such a manner that I will be unable to talk or breathe. If you succeed I will forfeit \$10."

Instantly the offer was accepted by a man who had once held the amateur heavy weight wrestling championship. He stepped forward and the iron throated man stood up.

"Don't be afraid of hurting me," he said, "and be sure to squeeze as hard as you know how."

Then he drew himself up to his full height and the athlete clutched him tightly around the throat with both hands. More and more he pressed, but without producing any visible effect. Perspiration started upon the athlete's brow as he further contracted his fingers, but the subject only smiled and then whistled a strain from a popular air.

But still the athlete struggled to make an impression upon the seemingly impenetrable throat. It was, however, in vain.

"Why don't you press harder, my boy?" inquired the wonder. "You are not exerting yourself at all, are you?" and then the victim gave up in despair.

"Well," remarked the athlete as he relaxed his hold, "you are the most remarkable man I ever saw, for a fact. Why, my fingers are stiff and cramped, but you seem to be all right. What is the secret?"

But the wonder only smiled and refused to make any revelations.

I, however, succeeded in extracting the story from him, and I give it in his own words: "It is explained in a few words. First draw your head backward and downward and again make the muscles rigid. Keep them so and your friend may squeeze until he is tired without doing you any harm."

"The reason," he added, "for drawing your head down is that your jawbone more or less comes in contact with your friend's fingers and to a great extent precludes the possibility of compressing the larynx. Oh, yes, it is necessary to have well developed muscles, but they can be acquired if you don't happen to have 'em. As for myself," he said in conclusion, "I have not been strangled yet and I am still in the field."—New York Herald.

Idea of Color.

Professor Jordan, writing in the "Popular Science Monthly" says: "In my youth I always associated the idea of color with the letters of the alphabet. In latter years the discovery that other people recognized no such coloration came to me as a surprise. The letter R, for example, always calls up the idea of greenness. It is impossible for me to think of R without the thought that it is green. In like manner S is yellow, and X scarlet. The coloration does not seem to be in the letter itself, as printed or written, but they coexist with the conception which the letter represents. As the letter R comes into my mind, it seems to go, with grass and leaves, into the category of green things. The sound has nothing to do with its apparent coloration, for C soft and C hard are recognized as the same letter, and therefore colored alike. The coloration is by the character of the type. It is in the letter itself, regardless of the way in which it may be printed, or of whether it is printed or written at all. The idea has no connection with the lettering in any colored picture books, nor does it arise from any association of that sort."

A Freak of Nature's.

A remarkable freak of nature is found among the hills of Delaware county, New York, in a sunken lake covering about three acres of surface, which lies between two parallel ridges not far from the New York, Ontario & Western railroad. The whole surface of the lake is covered with a thick growth of moss whose stems extend to an unknown depth, but certainly further than the arm can reach. Each tuft of the moss is of a different color from its neighbor, so that the surface looks like that of a beautiful colored carpet. In walking over the velvety surface the foot sinks down a few inches without encountering the water, which is at least two feet below the surface. Near the shore, in a few places, the water comes to the top. The buried pond is a wonderful curiosity.

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HOW TO KILL A BEAR.

A Frisky Colt and a Frenzied Runner Can Do It if You're Smart.

While Erastus Holland, of Tunkahanna Creek, was on his way home from Stauffer's mills one day he stopped at Darius Myer's place and bought a ram, says a Scranton correspondent of the New York Sun. Holland was driving a skittish colt to a pump, and he tied the ram's legs and put him in the bottom of the pump along with a lot of other things that he had bought at the mills. On his way past Owl Swamp a bear waddled out of the bushes and started to cross the road in front of him. At sight of it the colt snorted and wheeled completely around in spite of all that Holland could do. The pump was upset, Holland landed on his knees in the snow, and the ram and everything else in the pump rolled out. Holland clung to the lines, and after he had been dragged some distance he stopped the colt.

While he was getting the rig righted he heard the ram bleating, and looking back he saw the bear making for the ram. The latter was struggling hard, and before the bear reached him he had broken the strings on his legs and jumped to his feet. The next thing Holland knew the ram ran past him with the bear close at his heels. The ram legged it along the road for dear life, and so did the bear, but the ram was fleet of foot, and he kept several feet ahead of the bear.

By that time the colt had got used to seeing the black beast, and Holland jumped into the pump, whaled the colt with the lines, and sent it racing after the ram and bear. It was down grade, and at a turn in the road the ram sprang over a stone wall and took across a field. Just then Holland overlooked the bear, ran the right runner of the pump against it and tumbled it into a ditch. The bear was turned end for end, and when it got up it started on its back track. Holland wheeled the colt quickly, ran the bear down again and knocked it out of the road once more with the runner.

Again the bear was reversed, and when it got up it was unable to move in a straight course. It whirled round and round in the road, and once more Holland knocked it out with the runner. He kept doing that until the bear was pretty well used up, and then he pulled out his knife, stabbed it in the jugular vein and bled it to death.

Holland found his ram in a barn yard about a mile and a half from where he had killed the bear, and after he had secured him he loaded the carcass on the pump and drove home.

Consoling.

Miss Gray (the evening before her wedding).—"Suppose the clergyman should want to kiss me after the ceremony, dear, what shall I do?" Her dear friend.—"He won't want to."—Phila. Record.

A Proverb Corrected.

Sawyer.—"The proof of the pudding is in the eating." De Spay.—"No, it isn't. It is in the digesting."—Puck.

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