

WEIRD TALE OF THE SEA.

When Death Was Cheated by a Rope's End in a Raging Gale. Few living men have ever looked death so square in the face as a certain Captain Hodson...

On this occasion the vessel was several days out from land, in the midst of the ocean, when it was overtaken by a severe gale and thick weather.

The captain himself stood by the wheel to give the helmsman directions. The rest of the crew, having made everything as secure as possible, were crunched in the lee of the deck house.

A flaw in the wind took the schooner aback for a moment, and in that instant a tremendous wave that was following close behind mounted over the bulwarks and swept several feet deep from stern to bow.

Every one but the captain had something at hand to cling to, although the wave wrenched the man at the wheel from his hold and threw him on his face. However, he brought up against the deck house and scrambled to his feet just in time to see the rushing water carry Captain Hodson overboard.

Hodson's case was as nearly hopeless as it could well be, for it was, of course, quite impossible to put out a boat in such a sea or even to bring the schooner about to pick him up. But at the very moment that the catastrophe happened the ropes that held the gaff of the foremast in place broke and let the stick drop to the deck.

But presently a gust of wind lurching the schooner well over, her lee rail plunged beneath the water, and at the same instant another wave picked the captain up and tossed him sprawling on the sloping deck.

The helmsman had seen Captain Hodson swept away to death, as he firmly believed, and his astonishment at seeing him back again on deck may be imagined. Hodson was not seriously injured by his experience, and his vessel weathered the storm and brought her cargo safe into port—Youth's Companion.

The Gaelic Tongue. The Gaelic language was once spoken by a considerable number of the human race in the British Isles, the Isle of Man, northern France and Spain.

A Useless Pause. Calhoun Clay was getting married. Little and lean, he stood at the altar beside a tall and robust bride of 180 pounds or more.

Persian Bread. The Persian native bread today is very little different from that used a thousand years ago. The Persian oven is built of smooth masonry work in the ground and is usually about the size of a barrel.

Dramatic Progress. "What became of that play you wrote five years ago?" "The managers decided it was too daring to produce."

A Cruel Dig. Dolly—No, dear, I can't go any place with Molly. I hate her, the cat! Polly—But, darling, you used to be chummy with her.

Land in Bolivia. In Bolivia all vacant land belongs to the republic and can be acquired by purchase or lease, subject to special regulations. The unit of measure is a hectare, which is 2.47 acres.

Gigantic Neptune. Neptune, owing to its remoteness, shines as an eighth magnitude star. Its diameter is 35,000 miles, or a little more than Uranus.

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SURE SIGNS OF DEATH.

Guided by Them, There is Little Danger of Premature Burial. There is a widespread belief among educated persons that burial while still alive is, though not probable, at least possible.

When embalming takes place, of course, there is no possibility of being buried alive, yet being killed by embalming fluid instead of being allowed to revive and spend many more years on earth is not the fate one would select.

Although there is but one infallible sign of death—namely, putrefaction—yet there are many other signs, no one of which is incontrovertible, yet that when taken together, even in the absence of putrefaction, make the diagnosis absolutely sure.

The heart may stop beating, but this does not necessarily mean that the patient is dead. The writer recalls a case in his personal observation when a woman's heart stopped beating thirty-four times in twelve hours and each time was started up again by injections of brandy and of nitroglycerin.

It is often very difficult to tell the precise moment of death, but when the heart refuses to respond to stimulation, when the body becomes rigid, when the blood coagulates and the eyeballs become flaccid and lose their tension, then there is no doubt that death has come.

But this was not the only courtesy the enemy showed. On Christmas day they saluted the happy morn by salvos of shells. The first two that fell into the camps of the carabineers and the Imperial Light horse did not burst.

When the shells were picked up it was found that wooden plugs had been inserted in place of the fuses, and inside the shells were plum puddings. On the outside were the words, "With the compliments of the season."

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COURTESIES OF WAR.

Christmas Boxes the Boers Dropped Among the English. When the Boers advanced on Ladysmith in the Transvaal war the late Melton Prior was one of the twenty newspaper correspondents who threw in their lot with the English army instead of making the hurried retreat that was still possible.

The enemy succeeded in placing thirty-two guns on the heights above the town and kept up such an incessant fire that the troops and civilians were soon engaged in digging bomb proof shelters. In a short time they learned to distinguish the different Boer guns by their sound and gave them amusing names. Three of the large ones they called "Long Tom," "Puffing Billy" and "Weary Willie."

"Silent Susan," so named because the bursting of a shell was the first warning we got that it had been fired. "Bloody Mary," as you may suppose, was looked upon as a beast of a gun. In spite of the havoc that the cannon worked, the soldiers soon grew accustomed to the shelling.

On Christmas day they saluted the happy morn by salvos of shells. The first two that fell into the camps of the carabineers and the Imperial Light horse did not burst. When the shells were picked up it was found that wooden plugs had been inserted in place of the fuses, and inside the shells were plum puddings.

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