

Lake Tahoe and Philosophy.

Some twelve or fourteen persons have been drowned in Lake Tahoe within the past ten years; none of the bodies have ever been recovered. Superstition, ever ready to weave a sentiment from nature's laws, asserted that there was a doubtful mystery in the non-recovery of the bodies of those who had started out into the lake in this fresh-water sea, and that the bodies passed into its capacious maw. The true explanation of this mystery never has been given. The non-appearance of the bodies is due to three causes. The first is, the great purity of the water and its consequent rapid decomposition. Persons never go in for this reason, though I have not, while swimming in it, found any more than ordinary difficulty in sustaining myself. The second and main cause is due to the great coldness of the water. Even at this, the warmest season, the surface water is as cold as the drinker desires it to be, but it may be 40° or 50° F. It is as cold there as there are the thermes of an iceberg. When a body sinks in the lake to the depth required, it is frozen stiff. The process, of course, preserves it, so that the gas which originates from decay in other water is prevented, and thus suspended. The body is then kept in a state of perfect specific gravity than the water in which it is suspended, and thereby prevented from rising to the surface. The third cause lies in the great pressure of the pure water on anything which is sunk to a great depth in it. Corks placed down deep-subsided are pressed down in such a way as to make them one of the oldest residents of the lake. There is the belief that, by the time a man's body has been suspended for a week at a depth of about 200 feet (it is not likely) that it even reaches the cavernous and almost bottomless bottom of the great lake; the compression of the water has reduced it so far to that of a child's. Doubtless the idea of being suspended in such a "world of water" is not a pleasant one to contemplate, but to be pressed into a solid mass, and suspended in a liquid coffin of ice temperature, is quite as pleasant as interment and mouldering in the ground.

This seems to be the era of hoaxes, that may be doubted whether the foregoing is a hoax, or an emanation from some would-be philosopher. How a philosopher could contrive in one moderate paragraph to comprise so many ridiculous statements is the mystery.

The first statement that some twelve or fourteen persons have been drowned in Lake Tahoe whose bodies have not been recovered, may or may not be true.

"The true explanation" is the curious part.

The first, the second, and its consequence lack of language.

This however the author of this wonderful philosophical disquisition contradicts himself.

Second, the great coldness of the water,

and the "freezing stiff" of the bodies a few hundred feet down.

The idea that there

could be any such coldness in that water,

or that any such effect could take place,

is contrary to the simplest fact in the motion of warm and cold particles of water.

There could be no freezing below of deep water in a lake, unless it were first frozen at the surface.

The freezing on stones, at the bottom of shallow running streams, is another thing.

Besides, it is a pure assumption;

for nothing whatever is known, according to the preamble of the author, concerning the drowned persons.

Third, "the great pressure of the pure water."

This is diametrically opposite to the claim that owing to the purity of the water bodies would "easily sink."

The pressure, in the water, will not be materially different from the pressure in any fresh water lake.

The pressure, also, will be the same general opinion of "one of the oldest residents of the lake"—cloudless a queer fish—that the body of a man at two hundred feet depth would be compressed to the size of a child.

Altogether it is a very childish production, which is now going the rounds of the papers.—*Pittsburgh Post.*

MALFORMATION.—A NOVEL CASE IN WASHINGTON.—The Washington *Advertiser* says: "At six o'clock last Friday evening a child was born in St. Louis, Washington which presents most interesting features of study for the medical profession. The head and trunk are well formed and in perfect proportion, and the face is unusually well developed in all its features.

From the right shoulder projects a stump about one-third the natural length of the humerus, over the end of which the flesh and skin close so as to give it the appearance of a skilfully performed and successfully healed amputation. The left arm, especially the forearm, is longer than usual, but well shaped to the wrist. At that point deformity again appears. The wrist bends inward, and, instead of a hand, the palm is split into two crooked and misshapen fingers of equal length, which have the appearance of the claw of a crab, and this similarity is increased when the member is in motion, so the fingers instead of bending in upon the palm with the natural movement of an infant, simply open and close upon each other like claws."

Malformation again appears in the legs, which incline outward from the thighs. At the knees they become inward and about midway toward the ankles is a second and more sudden inward inclination.

On the lower third of the tibia of the left leg is a tumified spot about a half an inch in diameter at the base, and projecting about an inch outward and downward to a point perhaps a fifth the size of the base.

Club feet form the extremities of these misshapen limbs. The left ankle turns sharply outward, and the foot is turned back upon the under side. The toes are bent and twisted out of shape and place. The left foot is more strongly contorted than the right. It twists inward, and is over the top, while the heel is upward. There are but two toes on this foot, corresponding to the claw on the arm, but shorter, and having the appearance of simply misshapen toes.

This is a most remarkable case, and will be of much interest to the medical profession, where it has already attracted considerable attention.

HOW SMALL EXPENDITURES COUNT.—Five cents each morning—men trifle. Thirty-five cents per week is not much; yet it would buy coffee or sugar for a whole family—\$19.20 a year, and this amount invested in bank at the end of the year, and the interest thereon at six per cent, compounded annually, would in twelve years amount to more than \$69—enough to buy a good farm in the West.

Five cents before breakfast and dinner and supper; you hardly miss it; yet it is but five cents a day—\$1.65 per week, \$4.60 a year, enough to buy a small library of books. Hold this as before, and in twenty years you have over \$3,000. Quite enough to buy a good home and lot.

Ten cents each morning—not hardly worth a second thought; yet if you can buy a paper or pin or spool of thread, Seventy cents a week—it would buy several yards of muslin—\$37.50 a year deposited in this amount and you have \$2,340 in twenty years—quite a sing little fortune.

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