

OLD-TIME BLOOD-HOUNDS.

Wild Stories Told By a Mississippi River Captain.

"Blood-hounds are seldom found in the company of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' troops," said an old-time Lower Mississippi steamboat captain. "Before the war, in the old slavery days, I was very familiar with those hounds, their training and method of work. Dogs representing them on the dramatic stage are of heavier build and different species. Blood-hounds are larger and more compact than ordinary hounds, with hair straight and sleek as that of the finest race-horse, colored between yellow and brown, short-eared, long-nosed, and built for scenting, quick action and speed. They can take a scent three days old and run it down. Their speed is about equal to and their endurance much greater than the greyhound. Their bark resembles neither that of a bulldog, cur or hound, but is a velp like a wolf's. Their bite is a wolf-like snap, not the fast grip of a bulldog. The 'catch dog' used in slavery times on Southern plantations in capturing runaway negroes looked like a cross between a Newfoundland and a bull dog, and a powerful build. I'll describe you a 'negro hunt' a common enough occurrence before the war. The overseer or hunter mounts a fleet horse, holds his 'catch dog' by a chain and turns loose the hounds. Circling round they strike the scent and soon line off, their fast receding yelps marking the rapidity of the chase. The horseman follows over fences, through timber and swamp as best he can, holding his 'catch dog' in leash." Hounds sighting the negro divide, from a semicircle, and rapidly draw it into a large circle around him. As the pursued wretch runs the dogs in front of him fall back, but preserve their ique-distant pace in circle which they are gradually closing. On nearing him they snap at his legs, but do not spring at his throat. As the circle narrows the hunter arrives. The ominous sound of the chainrattle, like the warning note of a serpent, strikes the negro's ear. The 'catch dog' springs upon the exhausted runaway and holds him. Hounds are clubbed away, the fugitive secured, dogs 'leashed' and the hunt is over.

"I recall an instance in Arkansas, where the overseer, believing he was close enough, turned loose the 'catch dog,' but was prevented by a swampy patch from reaching the negro until, as he stated to me, 'Those d-d dogs between them had eaten that \$2,000 nigger all but the bones and head.' Usually, however, the hounds only surrounded and detained the negro until the 'catch dog' reached and held him for the overseer."

"I made a trip," resumed the captain, "down the Mississippi in a flatboat as a trading craft, which offered a fine opportunity to study the various moods of the 'father of waters.' Landing on the Arkansas side one evening, just as the sun was closing her blines, we tied our lines for the night to some old logs, half sunken as if by any earthquake. 'Twas a desolate spot. The land about us was a universal sink. The scene reminded me of the remains of a great political party just after a defeat. The surface was strewn with dead and wounded. Not a standing tree visible, the waters filled with floating or protruding timbers, the whole forming one wild waste. Standing near the bow, I noticed a few feet away a boiling in the water, a miniature whirlpool not over two feet in diameter. Others observed it. It spread and increased in violence. It quickly doubled in diameter. We threw the lead but found no bottom. We widened, drawing down heavy logs. I glanced around for a place of safety. 'Twas two miles to the opposite bank, or a mile below through a 'cut off,' dangerous to run even by the light of day.

Loosening our lines, we held her for the other shore. The whirlpool roared and widened. When half way across we were struck by a steamboat. Our craft was uninjured, but delayed. As to the damage to the steamer we did not inquire. We reached within a boat's length of shore, but the current 'downed' our oars and we failed to land. 'Twas then dark. We turned her and pulled for the cut-off. Soon a roaring, as of a cataract, reached us. 'Twas the water rushing between the stumps, trees and other surface breakers. It was a fearful outlook. As we flew on in the darkness, holding against the current, colliding with snags and our ears filled with that dreadful roaring as if destruction's long, dark fingers were reaching up for us, eternity seemed near. Not a word was spoken. Every man stood to his post and held his breath. 'Twas not until the old river was worked, restless and savage. The men, fanned by the pinions of fear, glanced back over their lives, ran over the notes of memory, and with but the color of hope, like that of a player who tries to 'call the turn' at faro, with bated breath and thumping hearts we made that thrilling race with death and dashed in under the wire a full length ahead, landing safely.

"I recall in my own life," he continued, "a stirring little 'set-to' with blood-hounds. I was compelled to make a business trip to a dwelling a half-mile back from the river, the temporary headquarters of some professional negro hunters. I was on foot, alone and unarmed. On nearing the house I saw on the porch several men playing cards and drinking, an arsenal of guns standing near by, and horses and hounds within call. Just as I began realizing that a man would be out of luck to have such an outfit for enemies, five bloodhounds bounded out and encircling me began to close in. I wanted no trouble, and walked slowly on, waiting for them to call off the dogs. We were in plain sight and easy hearing, but no sound came from the porch save the click of glasses and the roars of half-drunken laughter. The dogs closed in until within eighteen inches of me, forging ahead, alternately snapping at my legs. I then dealt the largest one a blow over the head with my heavy walking-stick, laying him out. The other dogs were called and caved away. I reached the house, transacted my business, and, turning to leave, the leader of the company walked with me down to look at the dog, which lay dead. I apologized, but urged that 'twas in self-defense. He replied: 'Yes, 'twas necessary.' I bade him good-day, or, rather, as Shakespeare's 'Mercutio' would say, 'I'll swear a prayer or two,' turned my back toward him and walked straight to my boat. Just why that man did not put a bullet hole through my frame, as I walked away from him I have never been able to think out."

RECREATION IN CHINA.

But Little Relief from the Monotony of Existence—Decline in Morals.

Some one asked a famous coleopterist whether he did not regret having devoted his life to such a narrow study. "No," he emphatically replied. "I could live my life again I would devote it to one family of beetles." A melancholy example of the domination of one idea. Of all civilized peoples the most conspicuously in want of relief from the monotony of their ideas are the Chinese. The Hindus have their frequent poojas, which make great inroads into their working time; the Mohammedans have their festivals; the Burmas are always gay, and require very little pretext to have a "poogy," or entertainment; the Manila Indians and Mestizos lead quite a merry life; and the Japanese we know to be the best holiday makers in the world. But when we come to the Chinese we see a plod, plod from year's end to year's end; and with the exception of a day or two's ruinous dissipation on the occasion of a marriage or a funeral, and a little dumb show ceremony at the family grave, the ordinary life of a Chinese appears to foreign eyes as dull as that of a galley slave.

Even the rich are little better off than the poor, owing to the absence of means of recreation and their inability to enjoy those that do or might exist. An official dares not attend a theatre for fear of being denounced and to go for half a day's picnic would expose him to the attacks of the censors. The amusements of these Chinese officials must, therefore, be kept within the privacy of their own walls, and unless they have a strong taste for literature or curio collecting, they must often be tempted to fall back on personal intrigue of various kinds, merely to occupy the vacant chambers of the mind. Is it this that causes high Chinese officials to engage themselves in the prettiest details which in other countries would be relegated to quite subordinate functionaries? The absence of healthy recreation appears to act on the mind as the privation of vegetable diet does on the body; in the one case the defect may be remedied by lime juice; what is the cure for the other?

The aversion to physical exercise, partly innate and partly imposed by the oppressive canons of social etiquette, is perhaps the most morally destructive of all forms of the privation of amusement. Moral health has great difficulty in maintaining itself without frequent and copious draughts from the refreshing springs of nature; and the life that is mewed up between brick walls, in an atmosphere laden with odious effluvia, is of necessity thrown back on its own inner darkness, with what consequences it is easy to imagine. All forms of the amusement are, therefore, to be considered as boons to the Chin-ese, and on the love of gambling, already well developed, could be engrafted the love of true sport, it would be a sign of that awakening from the sleep of ages which a celebrated essayist has lately enlarged upon.

Napoleon After Waterloo.

Whether any course was open to Napoleon after the disaster of Waterloo other than that which he adopted, a second abdication, is certainly very doubtful. Had he taken the precaution to dissolve the Chambers before setting out on the campaign he probably could have rallied the nation and protected the struggle. But the Chambers were unfriendly; any parliamentary body is naturally unfriendly to a military despotism, and at that juncture nothing less than a military despotism could possibly have saved France from the calamity of the restoration of the Bourbons by foreign bayonets. Hence, unless Napoleon should execute a new coup d'etat, there was nothing for him but abdication.

On the 15th of July 1815, Napoleon surrendered himself on board the British man of war *Bellerophon*. Of his appearance and bodily condition during the two months of his stay on this vessel we have an interesting account in the narrative of Captain Maitland, who commanded the ship. Maitland describes him as "remarkably strong, well built man, about five feet seven inches high, his limbs particularly well formed, with a fine ankle and very small foot, of which he seemed rather vain, as he always wore, while on board the ship, silk stockings and shoes. His hands were also very small and had the plumpness of a woman's rather than the robustness of a man's. His eyes, light gray; teeth good; and, when he smiled, the expression of his countenance was highly pleasing; when under the influence of disappointment, however, it assumed a dark, gloomy cast. His hair was of a very dark brown, nearly approaching black, and though a little thin on top and front, had not a gray hair among it. His complexion was a very uncommon one, being of a light, sallow color, differing from almost any other I ever met with. From his having become corpulent he had lost much of his personal activity, and, if we are to give credit to those who attended him, a very considerable portion of his mental energy was also gone. It is certain his habits were lethargic while he was on board the *Bellerophon*, for though he went to bed at 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening and did not rise till about the same hour in the morning he frequently fell asleep on the sofa in the cabin in the course of the day. His general appearance was that of a man rather older than he then was."

Keep The Eye Shut.

We are told to keep our eyes ever open, but it is often wiser to keep them shut. One of the chief causes of nervous disease is the straining of the eyes and the constant tension of the mind. When stretched out in the barber's chair do not try to read a newspaper, but close your eyelids under the soothing undulations of the lather brush or the dreamy sensation of the shampoo with the ducky's big hands gliding over your pate. In a railway carriage, instead of staring out of your sockets at the landscape that is being torn into shreds before you, fold your arms, bow your head and listen to the whirr of the wheels that make an accompaniment to the wordless song crooning in your heart. Again, in the concert room, in place of surveying the audience critically or watching the beauty of the singer behind the footlights, shut your eyes once more and let the music sink into your soul, rocking it on waves of emotion and waiting it impatiently into the ideal world. In a still higher sense to keep our eyes and mouth shut is one of the wisest lessons of life.

German Marriages.

German gentlemen, as a rule, do not care much for beauty in their wives, unless accompanied by some enduring qualities that shall fit them to be help-meets indeed. The very greatest caution is displayed by the Teuton in choosing a partner for life. Before committing himself too far with a young lady, the gentleman will first ask her father's consent to visit at his house, that he may judge from the young lady's conduct toward her parents, and brothers, and sisters, and servants, if she will make him a good wife. He must also see that she is capable of cooking, ironing, dressmaking, and other little accomplishments. Should she come through the ordeal unscathed the pair engage themselves by exchanging rings, and the bride at once begins to make her wedding trousseau—no trifling affair, as it is incumbent upon her to provide not only her own wardrobe, but all the household linen, furniture, and kitchen requisites. The marriage is an occasion for great rejoicings, and extends over several days, during which much tobacco is smoked by the males and much chatter indulged in by the females between the hours of feasting. Stolid though they be, all German husbands do not appear to be great success; yet the wives are evidently sweet, forbearing creatures, as the following verses from the German will show:

"Oh, I have a man as good as can be,
No woman could wish for a better than he;
Sometimes, indeed, he might chauce to do wrong,
But his love for me is uncommonly strong.

"When soaked with rum he is hardly polite,
But knocks the crockery left and right;
And puts my hair, and grows again;
But, excepting that, he's the best of men."

If the foregoing represents the average of German women, they are easily satisfied. What a treasure such a wife would prove, what an inestimable boon to a Lancashire miner, or to a Yorkshire cotton-spinner.

Wedding Rings.

In connection with wedding rings may be mentioned the following curious notice in one of the marriage registers of an English church: "1832, Nov. 5, Christopher Newsum, Charity Morrell; Charity Morrell being entirely without arms, the ring was placed upon the fourth toe of the left foot, and she wrote her name in this register with her right foot." The marriage of Duke John, brother of Erik XIV, King of Sweden, to the Princess Catherine (sister of King Sigismund II. of Poland) in 1562 gave great offence to Erik, who subjected the royal party to terrible sufferings. When the duke was cast into prison, his wife had the choice of living in one of the king's palaces, or, if she wished to accompany her husband, she was only allowed two maids with her in prison. When Catherine heard this she exclaimed that "she would rather die than be separated from the duke, and fainted away." When she was restored, Goran, messenger of King Erik, asked her what she had determined. The duchess drew her betrothal ring from her finger, and said, "Read what stands there." Goran saw the words engraved within it, *Nemo nisi mors* (None but death). "I will remain by you," said Catherine, and she so. The marriage of Napoleon I. with the Austrian Archduchess, upon receiving the benediction ring, he asked, "Why did not the Empress Josephine give me a ring?" The reply was, "because, sire, it is the custom in France that only the bridegroom gives the ring." "Ah!" said Napoleon, "that is good," and whispered in M. Prad's ear, "But do you know why the women receive the ring? It is a custom founded on the Roman law, which ordained that all slaves should wear rings; and, as the women are our slaves, they ought to wear this badge of servitude."

An Artist's Dance.

Everybody knows of Edwin A. Abbey, the clever artist whose drawings for Harper's of "The Stoops to Conquer," "Sally in Our Alley," and of "Kitty of Coleraine," are so much admired. His friends say that it is one of Mr. Abbey's little eccentricities that whenever some piece of work just finished particularly pleases him, he gives vent to his feelings in some utterly unconventional way. Not long ago a lady asked her what she had determined. The duchess drew her betrothal ring from her finger, and said, "Read what stands there." Goran saw the words engraved within it, *Nemo nisi mors* (None but death). "I will remain by you," said Catherine, and she so. The marriage of Napoleon I. with the Austrian Archduchess, upon receiving the benediction ring, he asked, "Why did not the Empress Josephine give me a ring?" The reply was, "because, sire, it is the custom in France that only the bridegroom gives the ring." "Ah!" said Napoleon, "that is good," and whispered in M. Prad's ear, "But do you know why the women receive the ring? It is a custom founded on the Roman law, which ordained that all slaves should wear rings; and, as the women are our slaves, they ought to wear this badge of servitude."

She sat down, and presently Abbey forgot all about her. He worked and worked, and finally he completed the picture. He stepped back, took a good look, then gave a long drawn whistle of satisfaction. The next moment the whistle brightened up into a rattling melody, and Abbey had "done" a first class jig that would have done honor to a professional. The lady, surprised, but not to be outdone, commenced to "pat," but that recalled the artist to himself. He turned and saw the lady flushed slightly, and apologized. But the apology was unnecessary, for it isn't every one who has the honor of seeing one of America's leading artists doing a little "pas seul."

Trees With a History.

A buttonwood tree supposed to be 1500 years old has just been felled at Burlington, N. J., that was twenty feet in circumference. A silver maple sixteen feet in circumference, in Middletown, Ill., was grown from a twig which a traveler stuck into the ground while passing through in 1840. The fruit and foliage of the buckeye of Arkansas is death to cattle. Indians fish with it tied in a bag, which they drag through the water, and in an hour the fish rise to the surface and die. A gooseberry bush is growing amazingly fifteen feet from the ground in the forks of a large elm tree in Newton, N. J. It is now two feet in height and supposed to be the product of a seed deposited there by birds. The remains of what was probably the largest cedar tree on the continent may be seen six miles from Oakville, Chesham County, W. T. The hollow stub stands fifty feet high and is seven-and-three feet in circumference two and a half feet from the ground. The two oldest trees in the world are supposed to be the one in Calaveras County, California, that is believed to be 2,500 years old, and the cypress of Somnia, in Lombardy, Italy, that is 3,911 years old, or planted forty two years before Christ.

EXECUTION OF CRIMINALS.

A Student in Paris.

Dr. Benjamin, the eminent physician and surgeon, has a forcible paper on the above subject in the *Medical Record*. The great principle is to do away as far as possible with the necessities in favor of all manner of luxuries. A young Frenchman will like a miserable room in the sixth story, with a brick floor and no carpet, and will go without a fire even in the coldest days of winter, whereas, by paying twenty francs more in the month, he might have a large comfortable room, well heated, and two stories lower down. He takes the twenty francs thus saved and invests it in a lottery ticket—that's a great business, by the way, in France. He will go without breakfast to have money for the theatre, he will dine on unwholesome food for a quarter, and proceed to spend three or four francs in a cafe for billiards and various drinkables for himself and friends. He will sometimes, I regret to say, prefer spending two francs fifty centimes for a bright new cravat to paying the necessary ten sous which would entitle him to a bath.

The Infliction of the Death Penalty.

The particular point made is concerning the manner in which the death penalty should be inflicted—in those cases where the law has decreed it. Hanging he condemns as barbarous, and he denounces the manner in which executions are carried on. He claims that the large number of persons allowed to be present tends to martyrize the unfortunate man. Even the part allotted to medical men on such occasions of listening to the heart-beats after the drop has occurred he can not reconcile himself to. He then discusses the various methods which have from time to time been suggested as a substitute for hanging.

Any proceeding which the subject can physically oppose, or of which he can ward off the deadly effect for a reasonable period of time, is unsuitable. This sets aside suffocation by carbonic acid gas, drowning and the use of deadly anaesthetics, and even more certainly all forms of poison. The hypodermic injection of poison, which lately has found many advocates, fails to meet the requirements that death must be caused instantly—just as rapidly to the strongest as to the weakest individual.

There is something sublime in the picture which historians have drawn for us of the manner in which Socrates calmly awaited the approach of death after having taken the fatal hemlock. Firm in the faith of his convictions, his last words were those of inspiration and encouragement to his fellows. His uninspired words form perhaps the nearest approach to inspiration of any in profane writings. With the modern sufferer of the death penalty we should not expect such affecting surroundings, and his great desire would probably be to "die game."

Mr. Benjamin sensibly argues that "any proceeding which involves the application of medical or surgical skill to insure its efficiency must likewise be ruled out. The medical faculty, presumably, will not assume the role of executioners. A physician may be called upon, as now, to distinguish apparent death." This will, of course, at once decide against pitching the medullar. Public sentiment will declare against any mutilating method, and even shooting, which is, perhaps, the most speedy method of all thus far alluded to, is open to many objections. Having mentioned all these methods to decry against them, the writer brings forward electricity as the method which is the most speedy and humane, and destined to eventually supersede all others. Sensation, as a physiological process, requires, he says, one-tenth of a second. Any method, therefore, which requires less than this time for its performance is absolutely painless. Tyndall, in one of his experiments, accidentally received a very large charge of electricity from some apparatus and declared that there ensued in his system an appreciable interval in which all the powers of life seemed to be held in abeyance, and in which he experienced no pain. The electrodes might be placed one under the feet and the other at the base of the brain. The pressing of a button would close the circuit, or the closure might be made by some clock-work apparatus, and thus the execution would take place without the direct intervention of a human hand.

One argument advanced in favor of electricity may seem to some a rather curious one. It is the horror inborn in man of instantaneous death. The litany, we are reminded, contains a distinct application that we may be delivered from "sudden death." It is argued that this inherent fear would surround the death penalty with more of terror and abhorrence than now exists, and that certain classes of evildoers would be more powerfully deterred from crime than they are under the existing state of affairs. In the use of electricity the fatal result would be positively assured. Judicial executions are often shocking blunders. The experiments of D'Arsonval have shown that while, after a shock of under five hundred volts life can generally be resuscitated by artificial respiration, a stronger electro-motive force is absolutely fatal.

From some of the minor conclusions of the article under consideration we might dissent. With the major ones we are disposed to agree. Before any method of inflicting the death penalty may become the ideal one a vigorous reformation in attendant circumstances is necessary. It is a judicial procedure and should be surrounded with the law's stern majesty.

Collars and Ties.

No other garments have the faculty of so revealing their owners' characteristics as collars and ties. The hat and coat may deceive, gloves may mislead, boots may convey false impressions; but the collar and tie give an unflattering verdict. The middle-aged professional man has his collar turned down, and wears the soberest of black ties. The horsey man carries out the promise of his gorgeous plaid jacket and breeches by a collar of formal cut, and a cotton tie imprinted with horses' heads or boots, with stirrups, saddles and other articles of equestrian furniture. It would be as difficult, on the other hand, to imagine an aesthetic poet abandoning his wide turned-down collar and loosely knotted soft surah tie for the sporting style, as it would be to conceive an American rancher in the stiff, four-inch deep "stand-all-round" and chimney-pot of the young gentlemen who ogre barmaids at fashionable restaurants.

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