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THE CURIOUS DEAD SEA.

A Traveler's Experience—Effects of the Water.

[Jerusalem Cor. Kansas City Journal.] Then I prepared for that rare luxury (I) a bath in the Dead sea. The heat was terrific, but I could not resist the temptation. Moreover, I wished to test the buoyancy of the water; so I threw away the umbrella upon which most bathers rely, and disrobing, boldly waded in. I substantiated the statements of those who maintain that it is impossible to sink in the water, by throwing myself recklessly in with closed eyes. Not only was it impossible to sink, but I could scarcely regain my footing, so lightly did I float on the surface. I had been warned about getting the water into my eyes or mouth, but could not help it. Bah, what a malignant, nauseating mixture it is! I could not eradicate the smart from my eyes or the deadly taste from my mouth for a long time.

"Oh, I hate the Dead sea," I blubbered, as I emerged, blinking and dripping, from the water, and proceeded to scrape the saline incrustation from my body. But the worst sensation was an awful smarting and burning about my ankles. I had been five days in the saddle, and my ankles were somewhat chafed from wielding the spurs. Mr. Floyd told of bringing forty two cadets down to the Dead sea once who had poor animals, and had consequently become very sore from the long ride. They would bathe, and paid for the privilege by walking all the ten miles back to Jericho. They were too sore to sit in the saddle. My hair proved to be very sticky for an hour or so. I don't think I ever got so thoroughly salted down before. Nevertheless, there was no salt visible at the north end of the sea. It is at the south end, where there is no Jordan to partially purify the water, that the famed mountains of literal rock salt are to be seen. Ordinary sea water has about 4 per cent. of salt in it, while the Dead sea has some 26 per cent. This percentage is fixed and steady despite all that the Jordan and other streams can do to "heal the waters."

Yet the effect of this water upon animal life has been exaggerated. If birds do not fly across it they certainly circle over it, and I am told that ducks sometimes swim far out on the sea. Of course no fish can live in it, but scientists have lately detected some very inferior organisms in it. There are also spots on the shore, remote from the point which I visited, where caecobrytes, willows, tamarisks, and even wild oleanders, flourish with their stems partly immersed in the waters. The presence of this vegetation is due to the presence of some fresh water streams near by. At various points sulphur springs exhale clouds of vapor. It was to these that Herod the Great went in order to be cured of his loathsome disease. There must have formerly been a smaller fresh water lake where the Dead sea now is, since we read that prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plain was well watered, fertile and like a garden. An inflammable bitumen, which crops out plentifully after earthquakes nowadays, is supposed to have been the material upon which the conflagration fed. The Dead sea itself, occupying the lowest depression on the face of the earth, has a maximum length of forty miles and a maximum breadth of eight and a half. The difference in level between it and the Mediterranean is no less than 1,312 feet, and to that extent would the projectors of the Palestine ship canal have to flood the Jordan valley, obliterating a vast tract of country, and changing the climate here altogether.

Earthquake Etiquette.

[Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life.] A tremor in the earth was perceptible throughout the remainder of the day, and the Afghans were, for the time being, overwhelmed with terror. Brigadier Shelton had quarrelled with almost every one of the officers except Mackenzie, with whom he happened to be sitting on a bench on the roof of a house when the shock took place. He looked round fiercely to see who was shaking his bench. Mackenzie cried: "It's an earthquake brigadier!" and, calling to Lady Sale, made for the stairs, which were cracking and falling about them, and, by God's mercy, they all reached the bottom in safety. In the evening Shelton came up and said: "Mackenzie, I want to speak to you." "Very well, brigadier." In a solemn tone, to make him feel the enormity of the offense: "Mackenzie, you went down stairs first to-day;" to which the latter coolly replied: "It's the fashion in an earthquake, Mr. Brigadier. I learnt it among the Spaniards in Manila."

America.

[The Current.] This is America. Here letterless grown men become learned; here entry clerks become leading merchants; here laborers become landlords. Where this thing is dreamed of in the old world, here we have its substance. What is most glorious is that it is right. Caste and snobbery are its antagonists; justice, its support.

'Twas Ever Thus.

[Burlington Hawkeye.] "How long have you been in the mining country?" asked the tourist. "Ever since '68," replied the native. "Strike anything?" "Yes," said the gold hunter, "struck bottom, first year. And," he added, plaintively, "I've been there ever since. Stand a fellow a grub stake, pardner?"

Magnetic Madagascar.

Mons. Halley, a naval lieutenant, stationed at Madagascar, states that the soil of that island contains much iron, and that in approaching it the compass undergoes considerable and totally abnormal variations. It is therefore suggested that Madagascar may be an enormous magnet.

Rev. W. Kirkus: There is scarcely an easier or a more dishonest way of misrepresenting a man's real teaching than by quoting some part only of the very words he used.

Chicago Current: Ericsson's sun-engine goes. It will be useful in the desert where wood and coal cannot be had.

Burdette: Why is it that the man who snores always gets to sleep first?

Protection in the Jordan Country.

[Jerusalem Cor. Kansas City Journal.] On the day previous to starting on our journey we called upon Sheik Rashed, the Bedouin authority from whom travelers obtain their escorts. Sheik Rashed holds sway over the Jordan country, and is quite a character. His face is all scarred and mutilated, there is a big hole in his breast, and he has had either five or seven bullets in his body—some of which remain there still. The hole in his breast has quite a history. He was along in person protecting a company of tourists at the banks of the Jordan when an encounter took place with a band of wild Arabs. The party of Europeans of course took to their heels, according to custom; but Sheik Rashed stayed behind to oppose the robbers. He succeeded in vanquishing them, but came out of the conflict with a barbed spear passing entirely through his body. He rode on to Jericho in this condition a distance of six miles. The barb of the spear was then filed away and the spear extracted. At another time Mr. Floyd had a party at the Dead sea who had just entered the water for a bath, when a band of sixteen Bedouins hove in sight. "Fly!" shouted the sheik in Arabic, and Mr. Floyd repeated the injunction in English.

The pilgrims emerged from the water, seized their clothes, mounted their horses unclad, and a mad gallop for Jericho was begun, with the bullets whistling over the heads of the fugitives. Sheik Rashed stayed behind and fought the sixteen single-handed, killing one and routing the rest. These are rather extreme instances, inasmuch as the Bedouin robbers prefer to accomplish their nefarious operations without bloodshed, if possible.

Sheik Rashed is also an exception to the rule in point of bravery. Ordinarily the escorts sent with travelers, although from the number of his own followers, are quite cowardly. Their presence with tourists is doubtless a considerable safeguard, but in case of an actual attack by Bedouins, whom want renders reckless, the chief hope of the traveler lies in the fact that the escort will flee, leaving the robbers to simply strip you of everything and let you go, horseless, hatless, shoeless, garmentless, in the wilderness!

I think it was one pound sterling that I paid for the escort, with the understanding that I should feed him during the trip. This money must be viewed as blackmail, since while it secures you protection, nominally at least, from hostile tribes, you would be liable to molestation from Sheik Rashed's own tribe if you got independent and insisted upon going unattended. According to the Arab code of honor, you are not a "brother," and therefore not entitled to protection, until you have paid a blackmail. In the present instance it is better to compromise principle a little and pay one set of rogues to protect you from the others. Most of the fee goes to the sheik personally, and the guard hangs around the hotel after you get back, a whole day if necessary, in order to persuade you to give him "a present" beyond the amount of the fee.

The Young Man of the World.

[Chicago News.] The individual concerning whom one who can never be mistaken, and who can be located to an exactitude, is the smart young man from the somewhat large town that prides itself on being a city, and exaggerates its population. This is the young man whose energy is devoted to conveying the idea to the wondering city looker-on that he is very "fly" and conversant with the entire universe. Nothing so quickly betrays narrow associations and lack of extended acquaintance as the loud attempt to impress everybody that one is thoroughly posted and can learn nothing in the city. The man and woman who know the world never seek to expose their worldliness. They know what they want to do, and do it unobtrusively.

Not so with this young man. He orders prodigally from the menu; he bullies the waiter and throws him a quarter with the grandiose air of an Oriental potentate. He orders wine without looking at the price. On his face consternation is delineated when his bill is produced, and he goes home without a dollar two days sooner than he expected to for lack of means to stay longer. This is the young man who, if he attains his heart's desire and secures employment in the city, within three months always professes to his former neighbors to know every man and woman of celebrity or note in the city. By his own account he becomes the intimate friend of every lady in his boarding-house, and is able to furnish not only her complete history, but choice and racy bits of fiction concerning her to any of her chance acquaintances. It takes about seven years of rigorous and constant snubbing before he gets toned down to cosmopolitan pitch.

The Fresh Young Chick.

[Merchant Traveler.] Once upon a time two fresh young chicks were promenading along the garden walks hunting for a free lunch. Presently they espied a June bug, and, without the ceremony of an introduction, they set upon the stranger, and the larger chick took him in and cared for him, while the smaller chick was fain to content himself by hoping for better luck next time. He, however, expressed himself freely and remarked: "You may be larger than I, sir, but you have no ancestry." "I have, sir. My ancestors are of the best Puritan stock, straight from Plymouth Rock." "That's nothing, sir. I happen to know the eggs from which the members of your immediate family were hatched, cost only 8 cents a dozen, while mine cost 50 cents, and scarce at that. Fudge, sir; you need not converse with me relative to the pride of lineage, for I am too smart for you," and he strutted away.

MORAL.—The winning aristocracy is the aristocracy of wealth.

Mono-Poets.

[Texas Sittings.] Mono-Poets is the new name for bards who write one bit of verse and then die. Why is it that this kind of poet is so scarce, and the other kind that having scribbled one ode never quits sending effusions in to the editor, is so plentiful?

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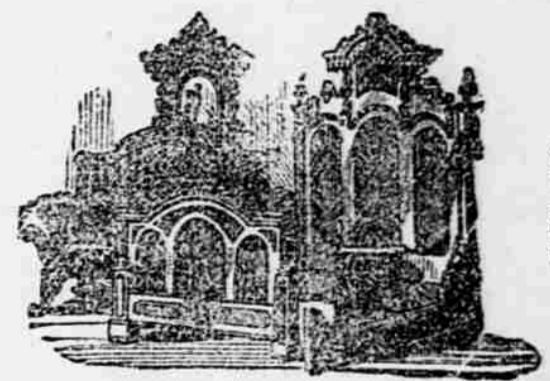
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