

BEING DECAPITATED.

AN INTERESTING QUESTION THAT MAY NEVER BE ANSWERED.

Are the Movements of the Head and Face After Decapitation Voluntary or Are They Attended with Some Slight Action of the Will—Some Experiments.

The question of the duration of consciousness in the brain of criminals after execution by hanging or by the guillotine is being discussed with greater interest than ever since Anastay, the murderer of Baroness Dillard, paid his debt to society. It is said that this remarkable criminal sent to his brother a letter on the subject as follows:

The separation of my body and that which constitutes my thinking being cannot so soon be accomplished. I believe there is a survival of about an hour. Come, then, Leon, be present at my execution and insist that my head be given to you. Call me with your voice and my eyes will reply to you.

This is but the repetition of a popular belief that has prevailed for centuries. There is a legend of a state execution in England at an epoch when the ax and block were in use, which sets forth that after the instrument had fallen the person whose head was on the block exclaimed, "You have missed me!" to which the executioner replied with a slight kick that sent the head rolling to a distance. The story never gained much credence, but is still worthy of discussion. Its truth or falsity would depend on the possibility of the instrument being so thin and sharp that the walls of the veins would not be displaced, in which case the circulation of the blood might continue for a few seconds, and whether consciousness might continue for a moment after the vertebrae of the neck were severed. This last difficulty would be the greatest, since utter unconsciousness is supposed to be simultaneous with the severing of the spinal cord or the breaking of the neck. In any event, scientists who have taken the trouble to study the faces of the guillotined for a few seconds after the fatal stroke, or who have made experiments with decapitated animals, do not favor the theory.

Several French physicians, and among them Dr. Paul Loye, now deceased, but once a professor at the Sorbonne, have experimented with dogs, using for their hanging or decapitation machinery like that employed in public executions. The dog was chosen for the experiments as having the most mobile face and being able to reproduce the movements which in rare cases have been observed in human subjects. Persons whom this treatment of dumb animals might revolt are begged to remember that the suffering is much less than in vivisection, since these methods of execution are generally recognized as producing the least pain. The guillotine employed by Dr. Loye was similar to that used for the execution of ordinary criminals in France. It consisted of a triangular knife or ax, surmounted by a mass of lead weighing over twenty pounds and falling over six feet upon the neck of the animal, which was severed at the third vertebra. The phenomena observed were similar to those remarked by other French and by foreign savants whose experiments have been less elaborate.

At the moment the head was detached from the body the mouth opened wide, as if the animal was making an extraordinary effort at inhalation. The tongue was applied to the lower part of the mouth and underwent a brief period of agitation. The eyelids were closed with light contractions. Then the eyes were opened and rolled from side to side and top to bottom, the pupils in the meantime gradually contracting. At the same time the jaws were opened and violently closed, and the face was rapidly convulsed. This was followed by changes at the corners of the mouth, vibration of the nostrils, trembling of the lips and erection of the ears. The ensemble of these movements constituted a series of horrible grimaces like those seen on the face of the guillotined, and seemed to express the most intense agony. If the cornea of the eye was touched the eyelids closed, but if an object, no matter of what kind, was placed before the eye there was no movement. Neither did crying nor whistling into the ears of the dog appear to cause the slightest sensation. The pinching of the tongue caused a slight shrinking of that organ. Although the pupil of the eye was contracted, the approach of a light rendered the orifice still smaller.

These phenomena occupy about ten seconds, and are followed by a period of repose continuing to the fifteenth or twentieth second, during which the mouth rests closed and the eyes open and without movement. At the end of this time the mouth opens and closes quickly, the nostrils dilate and contract. During this time, although the irritation of the cornea has caused a slight winking, neither whistling in the ear nor touching the tongue or nostrils with ammonia or cologne has been able to produce any effect. The opening and closing of the mouth resemble yawning, and are reproduced a dozen times, after which the motions gradually cease. Then the cornea loses its sensibility to the touch, though, half a minute having elapsed, the yawning is still active. The pupil of the eye dilates at the approach of light, but does not contract, and the cornea loses its glistening appearance. At the end of two minutes the yawning and other phenomena have ceased, ending in mere contraction of the fibers, and the head takes a corpse-like look.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Coffee Good for the Voice.
When making a speech Lord Salisbury never drinks anything, neither does the present leader of the house, and the same may be said of John Morley and Mr. Chamberlain. Sir Charles Russell, the leader of the English bar, on the occasion of his two days' speech before the Parnell commission, drank nothing but hot coffee, which he declared was not only good for the voice but an excellent stimulant.—Exchange.

The Thumb an Index to Character.
The way in which the thumb is held is a true sign of character. The man who turns it in under his fingers is always weak. That is the position in which it is always held by a child. The thumbs of great men are large and point out conspicuously from their fellow members.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Age of Coal Burning.
I have heard that when King Hudson, in the zenith of his fame, was asked as to what his railways were to do when all the coal was burned out, he replied, that by that time we should have learned how to burn water. Those who are asked the same question now will often reply that they will use electricity, and doubtless think that they have thus disposed of the question. The fallacy of such answers is obvious.

When Finished.
Busy persons, forced to defend themselves from interminable talkers, who have little to say, can appreciate a hint to which Henry IV of France once resorted. A parliamentary deputy called upon him and made a long speech. The king listened patiently for a time, then he decided that his visitor would do well to condense his remarks. He took him by the hand and led him to where they could see the gallery of the Louvre.

"The Begats."
The late Mr. Conington, professor of Latin in the University of Oxford, was noted for his prodigious memory. At a very early age it began to show itself. When he was a child of four or thereabouts he was sleeping one night in the same room with a relative, when, at the dead of night, his voice was to be heard crying out in the darkness from his little cot in the corner:

Too Precious.
"And you won't marry me, Kit?"
"I won't."
"No use talking about it any more?"
"Not a bit. It won't do any good, Hank."
The Oklahoma youth, hurt and angry, reached under his chair for his hat.
"It's my own fault, I s'pose," he grumbled. "I ort to have waited till we'd got a little better acquainted."
"Yes, that's about the size of it, Hank," assented the young woman coldly. "When it comes to courtin' you're too much of a sooner to suit me. Good evenin'."—Chicago Tribune.

Accurate.
In a breach of promise case, the other day, the lady on the stand said that when a friend suggested that she would make him a good wife, he answered: "Hem!" "Did he really say 'Hem'?" inquires the counsel for the defense. "He did," she averred, "or something of that kind." This reminds one of the accurate witness who swore that some one had called over the banisters, "Tom, Tom," or words to that effect.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Paper Fire Engines.
A novel fire engine is being tried by the Berlin fire department. The carriage is constructed entirely of paper mache, all the different parts—body, poles, etc.—being fashioned in the best possible way. The weight is much less than the ordinary carriage, while the durability is equally great.—New York Journal.

Force of Habit.
First Little Girl—Your papa is awful cross.
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He Fails to Establish His Identity and Loses Twenty Dollars.

The other afternoon, when the shadows were growing longer in the streets and the day was taking on a somber hue, a little group of politicians sat in the city hall regaling each other with ye stories of ye olden time. Among those regaled off was the following regarding an experience of William H. Seward, who was then governor of the Empire State. It seems that while traveling around through the rural districts and making sure that his political fences had no very bad breaks in them, he came one evening to the humble abode of a farmer.

It was too far from the town where he was stopping to go back that night, and so he asked permission to stop there. This was cheerfully granted, and after partaking of an old-fashioned country supper the old farmer invited his unknown guest to take a ride across the country with him, he having an errand to do in a neighboring village. With all the staidness for which Mr. Seward was justly famed, he accepted the invitation, and as they drove along in the gathering twilight he entertained the old farmer with all manner of campaign experiences and stories.

The old farmer's native shrewdness caused him to wonder why the stranger should show him so much attention, and at last he blurted out:
"Say, be you a book agent?"
"Not that I know of," was the governor's smiling rejoinder.
"Perhaps you're a lightning rod man, eh?"

"No, sir; you are wrong again."
"Then you're a sewing machine man." No, sir.
"Well, then, by gosh, you must be a politician."

Mr. Seward at once acknowledged the soft impeachment, and then informed the inquisitive old fellow that he was the governor of the state of New York. This quieted the old fellow for awhile, but at last he could hold in no longer, and he quietly informed Mr. Seward that he thought he was a liar. Mr. Seward, however, insisted on the truth of his story, and the dispute finally resulted in a wager of twenty dollars. The money was placed in an old lantern that was carried in the wagon to be used in case of emergency, and it was agreed that the first person they met was to decide as to the ownership of the money. Should he fail to recognize Mr. Seward as governor the former was to win, and vice versa.

The test soon came. Driving by the shop of a wayside blacksmith, the proprietor himself stood in the doorway. The farmer stopped his wagon and Mr. Seward said:
"My friend, my veracity has been questioned by the gentleman with me, and I should be pleased to have him convinced as to who I am. Will you be kind enough to tell him?"

The man of brawn and muscle peered at Mr. Seward long and earnestly. Then turning to the farmer he said, in awestruck tones:
"He's all right, Bill! I know him! He's Thurlow Weed, by gosh!"
The farmer took the twenty dollars and Mr. Seward was poorer by that amount than when he started out.—Chicago Mail.

A Trick of Cross Examination.
In an action for payment of a tailor's bill, a witness swore that a certain dress coat was badly made, one of the sleeves being longer than the other. "You will," said Erskine slowly, having risen to cross examine, "swear—that one of the sleeves was longer—than the other?"
Witness—I do swear it.
Erskine (quickly, and with a flash of indignation)—Then, sir, I am to understand that you positively deny that one of the sleeves was shorter than the other?
Startled into a self-contradiction by the suddenness and impetuosity of this thrust, the witness said, "I do deny it."
Erskine (raising his voice as the tumultuous laughter died away)—Thank you, sir; I don't want to trouble you with another question.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Soldiers Prefer Grain Food.
Cornmeal was the grand necessity of life to those legionaries who, led by Caesar, subdued the world, and who counted themselves starved and were apt to mutiny if reduced to the "famine fare" of animal food. Even British troops have been known to suffer from an exclusive meat diet, as indeed we found to our cost in the Zulu campaign of 1878, while the preference of the Roman soldiery for the vegetable food has its justification in the experience of the Russian army, and still more of the German one in 1870, which carried that memorable campaign to its triumphant close on the Erbswurst (pea sausage favored for a little bacon).—London Lancet.

Large Family.
Patsy Dooley was a very poor arithmetician, and was puzzled by a great many questions of numbers which did not enter other people's heads.
One day a new acquaintance remarked in his presence:
"I have eight brothers."
"Ye have eight brothers?" said Patsy. "Then I suppose ivery wan o' thim has eight brothers too?"
"Certainly."
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PLACES OF WORSHIP.

CATHOLIC.—St. Paul's Church, at between Fifth and Sixth. Father Canney, Pastor. Services: Mass at 8 and 10:30 A. M. Sunday School at 2:30, with benediction.

CHRISTIAN.—Corner Locust and Eighth Sts. Services morning and evening. Edger A. Galloway pastor. Sunday School 10 A. M.

EPISCOPAL.—St. Luke's Church, corner Third and Vine. Rev. H. E. Buttes, pastor. Services: 11 A. M. and 7:30 P. M. Sunday School at 2:30 P. M.

GERMAN METHODIST.—Street Sixth St. and Grand. Rev. H. H. Pastor. Services: 11 A. M. and 7:30 P. M. Sunday School 10 A. M.

PRESBYTERIAN.—Services in new church, corner Sixth and Grand sts. Rev. J. T. Fair, pastor. Sunday school at 9:30; preaching at 11 A. M. and 7:30 P. M.
The Y. R. S. C. E. of this church meets every Sabbath evening at 7:30 in the basement of the church. All are invited to attend these meetings.

FIRST METHODIST.—Sixth St., between Main and Park. Rev. J. F. Hill, D. D., pastor. Services: 11 A. M. and 8:00 P. M. Sunday School 9:30 A. M. Prayer meeting Wednesday evening.

GERMAN PRESBYTERIAN.—Corner Main and Sixth. Rev. W. H. White, pastor. Services usual hours. Sunday school 9:30 A. M.

SWEDISH (CONGREGATIONAL).—Grand, between Fifth and Sixth.

COLORADO BAPTIST.—Mt. Olive, (back, between Tenth and Eleventh. Rev. A. Roswell, pastor. Services: 11 A. M. and 7:30 P. M. Prayer meeting Wednesday evening.

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.—Rooms in Y. M. C. Bldg., 11th Street. Gospel meeting for men only, every Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Rooms open week days from 8:30 A. M. to 10:30 P. M.

SOUTH PARK TABERNACLE.—Rev. J. M. Wood, Pastor. Services: Sunday School, 9 A. M.; Preaching, 11 A. M. and 8 P. M.; Prayer meeting Tuesday night; choir practice Friday night. All are welcome.

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