

A SEXTON OLD AND GRAY.

A Generation Spent Among the Dead on Prospect Hill.

HE HAS BURIED FIVE THOUSAND.

Memorable Events in the Eventful Life of George Medlock, Now Calmly Awaiting the Last Trump.

Life Among Dead Men.

I have ever seen graveyards yawning in the dead hour of midnight, did you say? The repeated interrogatory of George Medlock, the venerable sexton of Prospect Hill cemetery, when talking to a writer for THE BEE.

In a neat and very little cottage at 1618 Cass street, Mr. Medlock resides with his wife, who has perhaps seen about the same number of summers as himself. He is sixty-eight years of age, and his hair on the sides and back of his head is as white as snow.

For twenty-seven years he was sexton of Prospect Hill cemetery, and three years ago he retired from that grave position. He is now spending the remainder of his days among live people. The old sexton is a jolly, good-natured old gentleman, who has deposited over five thousand bodies in the ground.

"No, I never saw graveyards yawn," continued the grave digger. "I have often heard of them yawning in their deathly silence, but have seen nothing more than a ghastly gap—a gap that indicates more than sleepiness. It is a gap for an eternal sleep. It is not a yawn as people are prone to call it. During my twenty-seven years' experience I have seen over five thousand souls—if the fact had not been their flight—laid down in their last and long sleep when the grave has yawned. I have had some queer experiences at grave-digging. I was the first to have taken a horse and had that grim undertaking when that last resting place for the dead was nothing but trees and shrubs. I have not only planted the bodies of people, but I have resurrected them, not to life, but from the grave for removal. Considerable of this work has been done at night. I had to do it then in order that the corpses could be taken away on a steambot.

In those days there were no railroads. I remember having taken up the body of a Chinaman about fifteen years ago. He died very suddenly one summer afternoon in a laundry on Thirteenth street. He ate a quart of ice cream and it killed him. After he had been in the laundry for three years some Chinese official came here and wanted to take the bones of the dead Chinaman to his native country. We found that he had not sufficiently decayed to be honored, and I took off his clothing and planted him again for another three years. At the expiration of this time, he was brought to the surface of the earth. There was a large crowd and a big gang of Chinamen at the cemetery to witness the performance. What little flesh remained on the skeleton, I picked from the bones. The Chinamen put them into a sack and made much ado over them. They had a chicken, oranges, candies and burned a lot of red paper and then the bones were ready to be sent to China.

"One day about twenty years ago while myself and men were digging a grave we accidentally struck a skeleton after we had gotten about seven feet into the ground. There was no sign of a coffin or anything else but the skeleton of a man. He was evidently one of the emigrants who had died in California in 1849 and had died on his way and was buried here. I struck his skull with a spade. Sounds like little like the grave digger in 'Hamlet,' don't it? But it was not the skull of a Yankee, it was the skull of a Chinaman. I might have been, however, but we never knew it. His bones were bleached as white as the driven snow, and around his neck was a black satin cravat. It was as fresh as it was when he first wore it. We had our grave about finished and never disturbed the skeleton. The corpse for which the grave had been dug was laid on top of the bones, and by this time I suppose that both have returned to earth.

"In my time I have come across a number of skeletons in digging graves. Among them have been the remains of Indians in decayed cottonwood boxes which crumbled to dust just as soon as I would try to handle them. I have also handled and buried bodies that other people would not get near on account of disease. Some years ago I was digging a well at the old Brownell hall when when returning home at night, I was told that two Englishmen who had been on their way to Utah, and who were toting in the bottoms, had died of cholera and that no one would bury them. Everybody was afraid that the disease was contagious. I took the bodies and deposited them in the poor farm. That night, in fact when I had just finished throwing in the dirt, and was about to leave, I was told that the bodies that had been left there by some one. I planted it also. A few nights afterward, in my tool house at Prospect Hill, I found the body of a negro woman, whose husband's name was Smith, and who was shot by a citizen while trying to steal something from the postoffice. She was there in a box and I placed her under the sod.

"I used to have a Dutchman who worked with me a lot of fun with him when we were in the grave yard at night. When he first went to work it was in the winter and we experienced some pretty cold days and nights. One night we were there working on a grave until 4 o'clock in the morning. The wind howled as it whirled around the monuments and the poor Hollander was scared almost to death. The grave was being made for a traveling man who worked for a wholesale drug house in St. Louis. He died of the small-pox and we were going to bury him that night. His remains were taken to the cemetery by a couple of colored fellows who dropped them in the yard and did not notify me that the corpse was there. The Hollander staggered onto the box and again he was almost frightened out of his wits. Three days later, while I was standing over the man pit, a lady approached and asked me if I could show her the place where a man who had died of the small-pox was buried. She was his wife. She gave his name and told of the circumstances connected with the drummer's death. I informed the lady that she was standing near it and pointed to the spot. She looked at it and the tears forced from her eyes. Dying then she asked me who had been so kind as to put flowers on the grave. I then told her it was myself. The woman made a rush for me and with tears of joy threw her arms around my neck and kissed me. Her heart was filled with gratitude and she

thought that I was not so hardened as grave diggers are said to be. "People have asked me if I have not become hardened by seeing so many dead ones laid under the sod, but I never did. Many a time tears have streamed from my eyes when I saw others sobbing. "I have acted the dual role of gravedigger and minister at the cemetery. In many cases, where fast women and licentious men have been taken to the graveyard—for interment, I have been asked by the friends accompanying the remains to say a few holy words for the ones about to be entombed. "Body snatchers? Yes, there was one robbery some time ago. The robbers got the corpse of an old German. They dug down at the head of the grave, broke the glass in the casket and snaked the body out, leaving the clothes and the coffin. I knew the next morning that grave robbers had been in the cemetery by the bungling way in which they left the grave. I don't think they got the body that they were after. "My grim and lonely work in the cemetery is over. I wonder, at times, who will lay me to rest in my little lot in the cemetery. There is a monument there and it is waiting for me and my dear old precious wife. There is nothing on it yet but the plain, big letters, 'Medlock.' When the sexton had buried me in my box and had thrown the clods upon my remains, perhaps with the same shovel that I have covered many a man with, I want these words to go on my monument: 'George Medlock is my name, English is my nation, King's Linn is my native town and Omaha is my financial salvation.'

A Sure Thing. Chicago Tribune. Publisher—It is your own affair, of course; but are you not running a heavy risk in ordering an edition of 50,000 copies of this book? Author—Certainly, but— Publisher—Well, read the dedication. Publisher sends manuscripts at second-hand prices. With the Friendly Sympathy of One Who Has Suffered Untold Agonies of Humiliation On Account of False Imprisonment, Unjust Suspicion of Guilt, And the Wretched Bungling of Law's Incompetent Agents, This Book Is Respectfully Dedicated By the Author To Those of His Fellow Men Who Have Been Arrested on Suspicion of Being Guilty of Crime. William B. Tascott.

EDISON'S CURIOUS LABORATORY Is Full of All Sorts of Bewildering Things. Among the materials stored in Edison's laboratory, which appears in an article upon Edison in the April Cosmopolitan, are samples of every substance in the world; the thousands of pigeon-holes and drawers contain skins and feathers, animal furs of the animal creation, minerals, herbs, grasses, drags, fruits and gums, in bewildering completeness. Some of the species are so rare that they are kept like diamonds, in the little folded papers. The curious nature of some of the materials there collected prompted the inquiry: "How can you ever want such things as shark's teeth or rhinoceros horn?" "That is what you don't know what queer things electricians use," replied our modern Virgil. "During the progress of the experiments with the incandescent electric light, for instance, nearly everything one can think of was used as a primary material from which to form the delicate carbon filament whose incandescence is the source of light. Finally, as perhaps you know, shreds of one particular variety of bamboo were used to give the most gratifying results, and there, by the way, you can see a few blades of the very reeds from which those strips are cut. Again, the delicate needle, which affixed to the under side of the vibrating diaphragm of the phonograph, is made from the revolving surface of the waxen cylinder, had to be formed of some material possessing peculiar properties of elasticity and rigidity. Scores of the most unlikely substances, natural and artificial, were tried before the right one was hit upon. And so it goes with all the little details of electric appliances."

Carter as an Author. Ex-Mayor Carter Harrison of Chicago left here this evening for New York, with a Philadelphia dispatch, where he will edit one of the most popular publications, testing his letters of travel in book form. "I find that book-writing is considerably to my taste, and have found great enjoyment in the compilation of my letters."

"Yes, you thinking of writing a novel?" "Yes, I am," replied Mr. Harrison, smilingly. "I have thought seriously of writing one—a novel, something on the style of 'Robert Elsmere.' I know it will tax my abilities, and that it will not compare with Mrs. Ward's wonderful creation, nor do I entertain any idea of it being its peer. I have also an ethical creed which I would like to expand into a novel. It is a subject, however, on so deep a subject. However, the only certain thing is the unexpected."

"What is the title of your new book?" "A Race with the Sun," said he. Galvanizing Wrought Iron. The American Machinist gives the following method for galvanizing wrought iron: The wrought iron is first immersed in a cleansing bath of equal parts of sulphuric or muriatic acid and water, used warm. It is then scrubbed with emery or sand, to clean the surface, and is then immersed in a solution of iron, after which it is immersed in a preparing bath of equal parts of saturated solutions of chloride of zinc and chloride of ammonia, from which bath it is directly transferred to the fluid metallic bath, consisting of twenty chemical equivalents of zinc to one of mercury; or, by weight, 640 pounds of zinc to 106 of mercury, to which are added from five to six ounces of sodium. As soon as the iron is immersed, the temperature of this hot fluid bath, which is only 680 degrees Fahrenheit, it may be removed, and will then be found thoroughly coated with zinc. Care must be taken not to leave the iron too long immersed in this bath, as its affinity for iron is such that it may become dissolved. This is the case with this plates of wrought iron; even when only a few seconds, it may be dissolved in a few seconds. It is safe, therefore, to let the bath previously act on some wrought iron, so that it dissolves a portion of it, in order to satisfy its inconveniently great affinity for this metal.

All danger of drinking impure water is avoided by adding a drop of genuine Angostura Bitters, manufactured by Dr. Siegert & Sons. At all drugists. An English firm has been using petroleum for fuel in a torpedo boat and getting a speed of twenty-one knots. The oil is carried in the vessel's double bottom.

COOKED IT WITH HIS BREATH.

Some Good Stories of Men and Other Animals.

THE PARROT CALLED FOR PAPA

This Scared the Burglar Away—A Horse Which Chews Tobacco—She Was Ashamed of Such a Lover.

The Curious Side of Life. I used to stay with a friend in Waltham, says a writer in the London Standard, whose park is separated from the house by a lake which is about one hundred and fifty yards broad at the narrowest part. I became intimate with two delightful dogs belonging to my hostess, a large collie, called Jasper, and a rough sky terrier, Sandie. The pair were devoted friends, if possible, always went out together, and, as to relate, even peached together. One afternoon I called them, as usual, for a walk, and, making my way to the lake, I determined to row across and wander about in the deer park. Without thinking of my two companions, I got into the boat and pushed off. Jasper at once jumped into the water and rapidly followed the boat. Half way across he and I were both startled by despairing howls, and, stopping to look back, we saw poor little Sandie running up and down the bank and bitterly bewailing the cruelty of his two so-called friends in leaving him behind. Hardening my heart, I sat still in silence and watched. Jasper was clearly distressed; he swam round the boat, and, with his nose to my face, said unmistakably with his wise, brown eyes: "Why don't you go to the rescue?" Seeing, however, that I showed no signs of intelligence, he made up his mind to settle the difficulty himself, so turned and swam to poor little Sandie. There was a moment's pause, I suppose for explanations, and then, to my surprise and amazement, Jasper still, but out and up to his back in the water, and Sandie scrambled on to his back, his front paws resting on Jasper's neck, who, in return, took the same and landed him safely in the deer park.

"Kid" Literature. "Fad" seems a trifling word to employ in connection with the vast subject of the marriage ceremony, as pointed out in Table Talk; and yet it is a recognized fact that there, perhaps, never was a time when there was such a strong "crave" for certain kinds of reading matter—and these kinds cover ample grounds. While one-half of the world is deeply absorbed in books of the "Robert Elsmere" order, the other half is engrossed with what has been termed, inaptly, "Kid Literature." The best specimen of the latter is Mrs. Burnett's charming "Little Lord Fauntleroy," that has taken young and old by storm, and that has inspired a notable number of imitators, who have rushed to the field with unbounded confidence, and an assurance that would be highly commendable, were it applied. Yet more curious "fads" in the current literature are the strange comparisons not a few of the authors draw, to say nothing of the incomprehensible— to the many words they use. One author of the day, in a much-discussed book, makes the dark tresses of his heroine exhale a fragrance like unto the "odor of distant seas." While here, she is made to harken to her lover's protests as if he had uttered the soliloquy of an "engastrimith." The same writer, in another talk-about story, tells of being "distracted at the intusception of a presence." These, and similar expressions, are from diversifying topics of conversation.

"I will tell you a story," said Foster L. Backus in the Brooklyn Eagle, "about the memory and reasoning power possessed by a horse on my father's farm. The horse had been brought up on a farm, and was very good tempered and gentle, but the groom's roguishness and fondness for having the whip constantly about his neck, he was not prompt in obeying orders sometimes. Then the groom beat and bullied him. The horse was very smart. One day the groom approached him in the pasture field. The horse was free for the first time in the history of his life. He saw the charred groom. A short halter was around his neck and the groom seized it and hung on. The horse tried to strike him with his fore and hind legs, but the groom dodged and shouted for aid. "The fight was desperate and very exciting. The horse fairly roared with rage. The groom was nearly fagged out, and in another five minutes would have been knocked down and trampled to death, when my father came on the scene. He seized the halter and told the groom to run. As soon as he was gone the horse subsided and was as docile as ever. He never showed that he had deliberately planned to kill the groom at the first opportunity. See how carefully he chose the time and place for the assault. A lonely pasture, the groom had his enemy all to himself. He had never shown the faintest sign of viciousness before. The groom kept the horse in a state of excitement, and the horse never allowed himself to exhibit rage. If he had killed the groom it would have been murder in the first degree, for the groom was deliberately there. Yes, sir, horses have reason, and they have memories also."

A New York Journal reporter assisted at a feast the other day that for oddity outdoes anything in line of eating in the United States. It was a good fortune to enjoy. He ate an omelet which was cooked by simply lying in a frying-pan, under which a man's breath was blown, nor was the meal confined to the omelet by any means; there was some baked wheat cakes, done to a turn, and some palatable coffee, and some other things. The person who provided the cooked meal is one of the most astonishing men in New York. His stomach is a well of natural gas, which he breathes out by day and night, and with every probability that it will continue flowing until he organizes a gas company. One thing is sure, the gas is at present being constantly generated. The owner of this remarkable stomach is a Spanish gentleman, Senor Barnello, by name, and is a funny fellow, who is inclined to a street lamp-post and ignite the gas by simply blowing his flaming breath upon it; for he has to do so at any time is to apply a match to his breath, and he has done so on fire. He did it several times yesterday, and at half-past 5 o'clock in the evening he lit every gas jet in the room, and he was in the museum; but that feat he will do every evening for the week. He will enter a darkened room, place a gas jet, say sixteen inches long between his lips, blow his breath through it, touch a match to the breath and become a gas fixture instantly. He says he has not accounted for his gas, but he has a business of his, and that he does it just as naturally as he walks. He protests that he has no trouble in lighting and heating his apartments, and that his cooking he can manage that like a chef.

A poll parrot prevented a robbery in Cincinnati recently. By climbing a grape arbor a thief managed to get through a second story window into a room in the rear of the residence of Hon. Emil Rothe at 269 Browne street. In the room in which the netural vision found himself was a large parrot of unusual intelligence, and which Mr. Rothe has owned for a long time. On the entrance of the thief the bird, seeming to realize that something was wrong, uttered a screaming and screeching, vociferously calling "papa" in a manner that struck terror to the thief's heart. The thief then the members of the household in the room, but that they would be aroused if Polly was not throttled was certain. In fact, the bird's cries were heard by Mr. Rothe, who proceeded to the room, but not until the thief had made his escape.

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any cases of suicide on military record is now reported from Kishinev. Lieutenant Mangusiu, one of the most popular officers of the garrison, proceeded on Saturday to the barracks, where his company was quartered, and was observed to be absent-minded and depressed. He went into a room where a number of the new magazine rifles were kept, and loaded one of them with a bullet. He then called in two men. Addressing one of them, he said: "Take this rifle and let me see if you can aim properly. Point at my left eye." The soldier had no idea the weapon was loaded, and obeying the words of command, "Make ready," "present," "fire," he discharged the rifle at a distance of three yards into the officer's eye. The bullet went through his skull, and death was, of course, instantaneous. He left a letter for his captain, saying that the soldier who shot him was innocent.

Albert Menning, a middle aged man of Eau Claire, Wis., formerly a subaltern in the German army, was arrested recently at Chippewa Falls, in charge of a steamer and was jailed there. It appears that Menning has a wife and child in Munich, whence he fled to America. He recently went through the marriage ceremony with a young girl living at Fall Creek. She is the sister of a prominent citizen of Eau Claire, who has just dissolved the previous marriage. The wife's suspicions were aroused by things her husband said in his sleep. Her brother has secured documentary evidence from the old country which shows a clear case against Menning. There is a heavy draught horse at one of the quarries in Westernity that has been driven for a number of years by the same man—a native of the Emerald Isle. It is so tame that the worthy animal will not draw a load in the morning until he has had a chew of tobacco, and, after being satisfied, he is off like a whole-skin breeze.

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