

A Merciful Provision of Nature.

It is comforting to know that in extreme cases of bodily harm men suffer much less than is commonly supposed. Rustem Pasha, Turkish Ambassador in London, was once attacked by a bear, which tore off part of his hand and part of his arm and shoulder. He affirmed afterward that he felt no sense of fear or pain. What occupied his mind was a feeling of anger "because the bear grunted with so much satisfaction while thus engaged."

Sir Edward Bradford, an Indian officer, bears a similar testimony. He was seized by a tiger, which held him with one paw, and then deliberately devoured the whole of his arm, beginning at the hand and ending at the shoulder. He believes he felt a little pain when the fangs went through his hand, but is certain that he felt none while the tiger was mauling his arm.

The author of "Among Men and Horses," from whose book the foregoing facts have been gathered, relates an experience of his own bearing upon the same point. He was walking unarmed through an Indian jungle, when a tiger sprang up almost at his feet. "For probably two seconds, which seemed like as many years," says Mr. Hayes, "he raced round me, while I stood stock still, wondering why I could not put out my hand and catch him by the tail. This was the only thought that occupied my mind during those eventful moments, until, with a bound and a growl, the tiger disappeared into the thick underwood."

Where Life is Long.

It has often been asserted that abnormal longevity is more common among the Russians than any other European nation. From an official report collated from local registers, it now appears the government of Kieff takes the first place in this respect.

During last year it is officially stated that there were fourteen centenarian deaths registered in that government. In the City of Kieff one man died aged 110 years, while within the suburban circle two women died aged respectively 102 and 104 years. In Breditcheff two men reached the ages of 101 and 114 years respectively. In Vassilkoff another patriarch died in his 115th year. In the same district there died a Jew aged 105; in Svenigorodka, a man of 110 years; in Tarastcha another of 115; in Unam two men aged respectively 106 and 102 years; in Radomyzel, a Jew aged 107 and a Christian aged 103; and, lastly, a man of 105 years died at Toherkassy.

Here are fourteen persons, dying in the same year and within the limits of one district, whose united ages amount to 1489 years. According to the Saratoff journals, there is still living in the government an ancient veteran of the First Napoleon's army, formerly Lieutenant Savio, and since 1812 known as Nicolai Alexandrovitch Savio, who has celebrated 126 birthdays.

The Nobility of the Donkey.

The donkey, who, rather undeservedly, has come to be considered one of the "naturals" of the animal world, was dedicated by the ancients to Bacchus, while the ass of Silenus was raised to a place among the stars. Apparently he was a more intellectual personage in early days than he is supposed to be at present. Ammonius, the grammarian, possessed one who invariably attended his master's lectures on poetry, and would even leave the choicest luncheon of thistles to do so. "Wicked as a red ass" ran an old proverb, which the Copts believed in so firmly that every year they sacrificed an unhappy animal of the detested color by hurling it headlong from a wall.

Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," mentions as a valuable amulet "a ring made of the hoof of an ass's right foot carried about." A tract written by a certain "A. B." in 1595, entitled "The Nobleness of the Ass," is exceedingly laudatory of that excellent animal. "He refuseth no burden. He goes whither he is sent without any contradiction. He lifts not his foot against any one. He bites not. He is no fugitive nor malicious affected. He doth all things in good sort and to his liking that hath cause to employ him." But what chiefly fills the worthy author with admiration is the donkey's voice—"his 'goodly, sweet and continual Brayings," which form a "melodious and proportionate kind of musick."

Among the Sumatra cannibals, when a man becomes infirm and weary of the world, he invites his own children to eat him in the season when salt and limes are cheapest. He then climbs a tree, around which his friends assemble, and, as they shake it, join in a funeral dirge, the import of which is: "The season is come, the fruit is ripe and it must descend." The victim descends, and those who are nearest and dearest to him deprive him of life and devour his remains in a solemn banquet.

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The Population Got a Wabblin'

Hearing the man in the seat ahead of me asking the conductor how far it was to Elk City, I inquired if it was much of a town.

"No, not much," he replied; just a common town.

"Any industries?"

"Only drikin' and gamblin', and buryin' them as gets killed."

"What's the population?"

"Well, I can't exactly say, bein' as I've bin gone four days. When I left we had about 300 population above ground. When I git back thar it may hev run down to 258 or up to 320."

"Then the population of the town rises and falls?"

"She does. She rises and falls and wabbles about. If old Jim Blakely is up in the hill, the population gains. If he's in town it decreases."

"You mean he leads in the shootin'?"

"He does. The blamed old critter gets drunk and raises a riot, and somebody is sure to be killed. Yes, we've got a wabblin' population, and it's all on old Jim's account. If he was out of the way I reckon we'd git along."

"Can nothing be done with him?"

"Oh, yes. Suthin's goin' to be done as soon as I git home. That's what I've bin away fur—to buy cartridges. Thar will be six of our leadin' citizens at the depot to meet me."

"And the seven of you are going to hunt up old Jim Blakely—and—"

"Exactly. We ar' goin' to hunt him up and wabble him underground and stop the wabblin' of the population! Would you like to stop off and see the amusement? It won't cost anything, you know."

I declined with thanks, and after a minute he said:

"Waal, it's jest as ye feel about sich things. It's likely five or six of us may be shot, and in the excitement you might git plugged, and so it's probably jest as well. If you'll stop when you come back, and I'm alive, I'll tell yo' all about it. I'm calkeriatin' it'll be a circus, a rope walk, a shootin' match and a cyclone all mixed up, but old Jim has got to be wabbled, or the star of empire will crawl into a holler log."—Detroit Free Press.

Interrupted the Witness.

Some time since, in south-west Georgia, a murder case was being tried before a certain Judge. The State's attorneys had seen the shooting, and they had an old negro on the witness stand. The negro became intensely interested in the story he was telling. His big eyes were fixed upon the lawyer who was questioning him, and he seemed to think there was no other person in the room. He was trembling with excitement, so much so that he stammered, and he told his story as if he were having a strictly private and confidential conversation with the State's attorney. "An' den, boss," he said in solemn and awe-struck tones, "jj-jess' ez I war a-comin' roun' de cornah, sah, I see him 'long o' de lamp pos'. I—"

"What time was that?" asked the Judge.

The witness paused just for a second, as if something had disturbed him; but then, without even turning his head, he went on:

"J-j-jes' ez I war a-comin' roun' de cornah, boss, I seen him 'long o' de lamp pos'. I—"

The Judge rapped the desk before him smartly with his gavel.

"Stop!" he said. "The Court is asking you a question. At what time did you come around the corner?"

Again the witness stopped, and made a motion with his hand as if he were brushing away a fly from his ear, but he never turned around, and again started to tell his story:

"Ez I wuz a sayin', boss, I rounded dat dah cornah, au' I seen him, 'long of de—"

The Judge brought his mallet down with a noise which almost caused the witness to leap off the stand, and then roared out:

"What do you mean, sir? If you do not answer my question instantly I shall commit you!"

The witness turned, faced the Court, and said in deprecating tones:

"L! look er yere, boss, doan' yo' see I'm talking to dis gen'lman?"

The lawyers were almost convulsed with laughter, the Judge bent his head and shook with merriment, and the witness was allowed to finish his story undisturbed.

Coroner (of Woollytown, Arizona)—What is your verdict, gentlemen of the jury, as to the deceased's death?

Jury—That he committed suicide by not drawin' his gun in time.

"Excuse me, madam," said the paying teller. "but you have not endorsed this check. If you will write your name on the back of it, it will be all right." "Oh, of course," said the little woman. "I had forgotten." Then she endorsed the check: "Sincerely yours, Janette Hickeworthy."