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BURNING DIAMONDS.

Costly Experiments Finally Settle a Much Disputed Subject.

In the year 1694 it was discovered by actual experiment that a diamond would burn. Then Cosmos III had one fixed in the focus of a burning glass, and after some exposure to the rays of the sun it cracked, carbonated, and finally disappeared like a ghost, leaving not a single trace that it had ever existed, not even an atom of ashes.

But experiments of this sort were costly; they were long in yielding any scientific result. It was only a king or a sovereign prince that could afford to see his jewels vanish like the gifts of a fairy godmother. Another potentate, Francis I, tried the quality of a number of valuable diamonds in the heat of a furnace, and may have had some gratification when he found that they had disappeared. This was in 1751, and about twenty years later scientific experimenters burned a magnificent diamond in a tube.

A jeweler named Lelliane now came forward and doubted the possibility of burning a diamond, even going so far as to accuse the chemist, Macquire, of fraud in conducting his diamond burning operations. He had often, he asserted, exposed diamonds to great heat, with the sole result of increasing their brilliancy.

A Mr. Stroeter had done the same with success; but it seems that Lelliane only knew half of what Mr. Stroeter knew. When Macquer demanded that the jeweler further some diamonds in coal in a crucible he readily assented, and in three hours they had all disappeared.

Then Mallard, who seems to have had his suspicions of chemistry, put three diamonds in an earthen twat packed in powdered charcoal and exposed them to intense heat without injury. Next, Lavoisier came forward with his explanations of the phenomena attending the results of these various experiments. He says that by shutting out the air, diamonds are preserved in the intense heat of a furnace, but that the admission of oxygen, which combines with the carbon of the diamond, allows it to burn almost as readily as a piece of coal.—St. Louis Republic.

A Noted British Novelist.

Mr. Furjeon is before the medium height, with a jolly, round face and small side whiskers. He is excellent company, and entertains many choice spirits at his home in Adelaide road, South Hampstead. Mr. Furjeon is an omnivorous reader, and has the faculty of remembering what he reads strongly developed. When he retires for the night he always has a table on which are a heap of books and three or four candles placed beside his bed. In his library methods Mr. Furjeon is singularly unaffected.

He writes all his novels on a typewriter, in the manipulation of which he has become an adept. On one occasion he composed and set up a complete novel in a case which he had in his house. He is a shorthand writer, and always carries a notebook in his pocket. If an idea strikes him, no matter whether he is on the street or in bed, he promptly makes a memorandum of it in his notebook. Mr. Farjeon has been engaged on three novels at the same time, and he has seldom less than two under way. He has made a great deal of money from his writings, but he is an extremely liberal man, and spends it freely.—Cor. Florida Times-Union.

Aromatic Stimulants in Sickness.

Every sensible physician relies to a great extent on the recuperative powers of the patient. He leaves as much as possible to nature, knowing perfectly well that a portion of her beneficial work will be accredited to his medical skill. There have been in the profession some physicians who have been confined to exaggerate the automatic branch of the healing art, and among them the German Stahl, who called his system "animism," and the Scotch doctor Brown, both eminent practitioners of the last century.

Dr. Brown called his method "stimulism," and its leading principle seems to have been to counteract the vital principle by means of liquors containing a greater or less percentage of alcohol, or by the use of less active stimulants, such as aromatic substances. The practical use of aromatics as a preventive is as old as Hippocrates, while the chemistry of perfumes is universally regarded as beneficial by modern hygienists.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Piles of Shells.

In the northern and eastern states the immense mounds of oyster, clam and mussel shells found in various localities along the coast prove how inexhaustible mines for agriculturists, who use them as a top dressing for their farms. In the neighborhood of Damariscotta, Me., there are mounds which are estimated to contain not less than 3,000,000 cubic feet of shells—a lasting monument to the red man's partiality for unobtrusive food. Prior to being used the shell must be burned, which is done in rude, home made kilns. A very amusing story is told by Mr. Ingersoll relative to the discovery of one of kilns, which was thought by its owners the Indians to be an aboriginal house until they found the half of a well baked brick at the bottom of the structure.—Detroit Free Press.

THE FUNERAL MAN.

Curious Delusion of a Certain Character Who Follows the Hearse.

A funeral procession wound its gloomy way down Mission street. The carriages rolled heavily over the pavement.

The hearse was a white one, and the little coffin inside was covered with flowers.

An old man passing along stopped and raised his hat as the hearse passed him, and a group of noisy street gamins stopped their play a moment. As the last carriage turned the corners a strange figure shambled into sight—a weird figure that seemed to loom suddenly out of the mist like a spectre—the figure of a tall old man running.

He was running as fast as he could, with a sort of halting lump that brought him every minute nearer the last carriage. He stumbled painfully over a stone in the street, but he never paused. He limped heavily on, his wild eyes glowing with an eager light. He was a thin, gaunt old man with a long gaunt face and jaws that moved horribly.

Just as the procession stopped at the church the strange figure stumbled forward.

When the little coffin was lifted tenderly from the white hearse the figure pushed sturdily up to the steps. The pallbearers walked carefully up the stairs to the door.

On the topmost step stood the tall man. He was still. His lean arm was stretched out in a stately gesture. His wild eyes were alight with a fanatic's enthusiasm.

When the coffin passed him he waved his stick with a kingly dignity. He muttered something to himself. A policeman took him by the arm.

"Move on," he said.

The tall man started suddenly. The light faded from his face. He limped silently away. A little child standing near the steps stifled her sobbing.

"Oh," she said, terrified, "there is the funeral man."

The funeral man is a well known character. All the undertakers know him. All the sextons know him, but no one knows where he lives.

Some horrid intuition seems to tell him where the unburied dead are lying. He haunts the afflicted neighborhood until the funeral procession forms. Then he hurries behind the carriages and always manages to reach the church in time to meet the coffin as it is borne to the church. Sometimes it rains or starts without his knowing it, but he always starts into sight somewhere and hurries, limping, after the last carriage.

He is very tall and very thin. His gaunt figure is dressed in a tight fitting frock coat, which is shiny and threadbare, but scrupulously neat. His head is covered by a gray cap and he carries in his hand a long stick. He never speaks to any one nor does he reply when one addresses him.

No one ever sees him except at a funeral. He seems to think it his mission to utter his mysterious words over the bodies of the dead. Whether they be curses or blessings no one can guess. There is scarcely a church in the city upon whose steps he has not stood and waved his gaunt arm in mysterious greeting to a silent figure in the coffin.

The drivers of the hearses know him, and look back expectantly at the sound of his shambling limp.

The little children of the poor, who wander aimlessly in the wake of any procession, know him, and shrink away frightened at his approach. Yet he has never harmed them. He uses nothing but the molding of the mourning plumes. He listens only to the rumble of the heavy wheels of a hearse.

No one knows his name or how he lives. He is simply the "Funeral Man."

To what strange happening he owes the ghoulish fancy who can say?—San Francisco Examiner.

What Did the Preacher Think?

Over in Jersey City there is a very bright little girl of 6 years, whose father is a Presbyterian. They live a few doors from the church. A few Sundays ago the parents went to the communion service, and baby was left at home to escape the long ceremony. It was a warm day, and "Communion," the usual closing hymn, floated out through the open windows. The good deacon took the pastor home to dine with him. When grace had been said little Bessie remarked:

"I know you was couin' home, papa."

"How did you know, little one?"

"Cause I heard the song."

"What song?" asked the preacher.

"Oh, you know; the one where you say, 'Bring forth the royal dessjuhs.'"—New York Letter.

He Had a Small Opinion of the Bishop.

The late bishop of Ely was once talking to a laborer, and unfortunately let fall a remark which plainly showed that he had no idea how turnips should be sown. Hodge looked at him from round eyed in an amazement too big for utterance. But when the bishop had turned aside he said:

"I a bishop, indeed! Why, 'e ain't fit to 'old a plow!"—Exchange.

Napoleon Charged With Heartlessness.

A serious accident which befell Gen. Durosne at Kutno did not delay Bonaparte's journey by a quarter of an hour. He saw him fall, passed by him, went on his way, and not until he had gone five or six miles farther did the idea strike him that he ought to have inquiries made about him.—Talleyrand's Memoirs in Century.

Really, in the interests of literature and humanity, what difference does it make who wrote Shakespeare?

The Illinois State Zeitung, complimenting Dr. Goode, of the Smithsonian, in reference to his ability for assisting in the World's fair preparations, says that he is very well acquainted with fabrics indeed. Chicago may as well give up trying.

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