

THREE YEARS UNDER WATER—
THE SUBMARINE LIFE OF A
PROFESSIONAL DIVER.

About twenty years ago, Hiram Hill, then well known in Cairo, accepted employment on Messrs. Eads & Sons' wrecking or submarine bell boat. In time he was installed as a diver, and as such we propose to speak of him. He remained in the employment of Messrs. Eads & Nelson a period of eighteen years. He is now on Messrs. Dugan & Co's Underwriter, where we saw him and learned something of the life of a diver.

The use of a bell in diving is now discarded. The diver wears a water-tight armor over his entire person, except the head, which is covered by an inverted metallic pot, in which the head can turn and move at ease. Thick, transparent glass is fixed in front to serve as a window; and to prevent accident, this glass is protected by steel guards or fenders. Equipped in this armor, the diver puts on a pair of lead-soled shoes, weighing each twenty pounds, latches to his back and breast pieces of lead weighing forty pounds, attaches the tube, through which he receives air, to the back of his head-pot, and then is ready for his submarine explorations. He generally descends to the bottom of the river by the use of a ladder, but can, without incurring any risk, jump from the boat and sink to the bottom. The moment he disappears under water the air pump commences its work of supplying him with a constant stream of fresh air. If, at any time, the air becomes too great a pressure upon him, the pressure is relieved by a self-acting valve, fixed at the side of the head. If the pump does not furnish sufficient air, the diver indicates the fact by signs, and the supply is increased.

Mr. Hill informs us that he has remained under water five hours at a time. The great weight of lead fastened upon his feet and body is necessary, to counteract the buoyancy of the air furnished him by the pump. While on the boat, the armor and weights form a load for a strong man. Under water, they impose no realizable weight, and in no way impede motion. Mr. Hill informs us that he has, while under water, often clambered up stanchions, jumped down hatchways, a distance of twelve and fifteen feet, with much greater ease and less risk than he might have performed from hatch to hatch on shore. Taking with him his tools he has frequently worked for hours at a time, patching up the bottoms of snagged steamers, sawing boards, boring holes, driving nails, &c., with perfect ease and accuracy. When the water is clear he can recognize shapes at a distance of two or three feet, and at a distance of six inches he can determine the different kinds of timber.

When the rivers are high and the water is muddy, nothing is impervious to black, tarry, or slimy matter, whether his eyes are open or shut. But with him the character of the water is immaterial. He has been at the business so long that by the mere sense of touch he can instantly determine what portion of the wreck he is exploring; can cork up cracks or patch up holes; can determine the character of the cargo, pass from hatch to hatch through the hold; and do everything else under the water that an expert blind man might do on land. He says that he breathes full and satisfactorily; that there is no stifling sensation, no odds how long he remains under. Indeed, so accustomed is he to life and labor under water, that he feels somewhat lost when his stay on land is protracted.

He is of opinion that about three years of his life have been spent under water; yet he has no scales on his body, no signs of fins or gills, not even web feet. He is, to all intents and purposes, a human being, not even partaking of the nature of a mermaid or any other fish.—Cairo (Ill.) Democrat.

A FEMALE "HELL" IN NEW YORK.

The prevailing vice among New Yorkers is gambling. Men gamble in stocks and gold, and when the stock market is closed, they indulge in the healthy pastime of "fighting the tiger," otherwise called faro. In many of the down town business streets gambling "hells" are located in order to accommodate merchants with a "little game" during the hours of toil. Up town, in Broadway, from Spring street, even as far as Fortieth street, two or three gambling saloons are on each block, and the side streets are infested with them. Hovering about these dens are men arrayed in spotless broadcloth and fine linen, shiny silk hats and dyed moustaches, waiting, ready and anxious to pounce upon the unwary, and lead them to destruction. To what extent gambling is carried on, our police records will show. Bank clerks, cashiers, and treasurers become defaulters, and the origin of the crime is traced to one cause—gambling. The police know this and are cognizant of the whereabouts of each "hell," yet no effect is made towards their suppression. It is true, a raid is occasionally made on some poor wretched, but the "big game," like John Morrissey, John C. Heenan, George Beers, Joe Hall, and others, go scot free. What is "saucy for the goose is sauce for the gander," is an old saying and the matter of gambling is no exception to the rule. The wives and daughters of our most wealthy citizens are afflicted with the mania, and play as deeply and heavily as their husbands and fathers. In 2nd street, near Madison avenue, is a gambling house, patronized exclusively by females. With the kind permission of your readers we will visit it. It is a modest, unpretentious looking house, the entrance scrupulously clean, and presenting no different appearance, externally, than those adjoining, save the blinds are all tightly closed. Ringing the bell we were admitted by a gorgeously apparelled woman who acts as janitress. Ascending the stairs, we were ushered into the parlor on the first floor. There are elegantly, evenly luxuriously furnished. The person who fitted up these rooms must have had exquisite taste. The paintings hanging on the walls are rare and valuable, but the most conspicuous, and the one that first strikes the eye and rivets the attention, is the painting by Ary Scheffer of the gambling scene from Bulwer's play of "Money," and for which it is stated August Belmont has offered \$20,000 and

been refused. Seated around the room about the painting are a number of ladies, who are dressed in the height of fashion. The players are flushed with excitement, but their faces are calm and collected and rakes in the "chips" with the indifference of a god. Ever and anon some player, when a heavy bet is lost, calls for wine which is speedily supplied by an attentive and demure looking Hebe. That lady at the center of the table is the wife of one of our most wealthy merchants. She could tell you her name, but tales must never be told out of school. Observe that young lady, with a bonnet no larger than a woman's handkerchief, and a ribbon, the one who is now taking off her diamond ring to stake, and which she will lose as sure as eggs is eggs, is the daughter of an ex-Judge. Oh, our wealthy merchant's wife is a loser; see, she rises from the table biting her lips till the blood comes (to our neighbor's emotion). Come, let us away, such scenes do not make our opinion of poor, weak human nature the least exalted. Is it any wonder that we so frequently see rewards offered for lost diamond rings, necklaces and bracelets? If we had the power of Asmodeus, we would see these "chips" articles in the safe of some gentleman who has for his sign the old Lombardy emblem of three balls. The thirst for gambling will be satisfied, and money must be obtained.—Correspondent Syracuse Standard.

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