

DEATH FORETOLD BY A CLOCK.

"We have not exactly a banshee in our family, who foretells by her wailing an approaching death," said a lady to a writer in the *Globe-Democrat* recently, "but we have had mysterious warning of such given us time and time again by an old clock which has been in our family for the past 120 years. The works were ruined by a shot fired by a British soldier during the revolutionary war at my great-grandfather, which shot, passing entirely through his body, killed him instantly, and then broke the glass door, penetrating the works and stopping them forever; for though innumerable attempts have been made to repair them, it seemed that some unknown power kept the clock silent except when death flapped his black wings over the household; so it was banished to the garret.

"The first instance of its warning was when my grandfather died. He had been very ill, but the physicians had at last pronounced him out of danger, and his family were just congratulating themselves on this news when the loud tones of a clock striking 12, slowly and solemnly, like the tolling of a bell, was heard. 'Why, what is that?' said my grandmother. There was but one other clock in the house, which was in full view, so it was evident that it was not that one. 'It is my father's clock,' said her husband. 'It has struck the close of my day; and before they could reach him he was dead, just as the last stroke died away.

"This occurrence was repeated when my grandmother herself lay dying. The old clock struck 12 just as she drew her last breath, and my father, at last, believing that there was something supernatural in the affair, had the old works removed, leaving only the hollow case; but a few years after, when my brother was brought home dangerously wounded after the battle of Chancellorsville, the long, slow, solemn tones of the old clock were heard as before, and poor Leon's life went out as they died on the air. They struck for my father and for my little child, who died last year. The clock warned me, too, when my sister died in Japan. I had just got a letter from her, in which she had spoken of feeling very well, when I heard the old clock, which was in a remote store room, strike so rapidly that the notes almost mingled, and then began slowly to strike another twelve strokes. 'My sister is dead,' I said to my husband, 'and has died very suddenly, but who the other strokes are for I cannot imagine.' My husband tried to reason and then to ridicule the idea, but I mourned for my sister as earnestly as though I had seen her die, and when, as I knew I should, I heard the news of her sudden death, I found it had taken place on the same day and at the same hour as that on which the clock struck, allowing for the difference of time between Japan and Boston. Her baby, a few hours old, died a few minutes after the mother."

SPREADING DISEASE IN BOOKS.

We have on several occasions discussed the possibility of conveying infection by means of books lent out by circulating libraries. That disease may be thus conveyed there can be no doubt, though this affords no real ground of objection to the loan system if ordinary precautions be observed. It is, therefore, the more satisfactory to note that librarians on their part are not inclined to neglect any due care in this particular. As an instance we may now refer to the method pursued at one public establishment of this kind where lists of all the infected houses in the surrounding streets are received weekly. The occupants of such houses, if in receipt of books, are warned not to return them until effectually disinfected. No doubt the act for the notification of infected diseases would afford useful assistance to all such endeavors on the part of librarians to avoid any possible transfer of contagion, and they would do well to avail themselves of its aid. It should be remembered, however, that it does not cover every communicable disease, measles being a noteworthy exception. In order to secure still further the desired immunity, it is advisable that each borrower be required, under suitable penalties, to guarantee the freedom of his household from infection at the time being, to report immediately the appearance of infectious disease, and to arrange for disinfection of books on loan to him. We would further suggest that the work of disinfection be carried out if possible at the library building itself. Its efficiency could then be assured.—*Ex.*

WOMEN AS PHARMACISTS.

I entered a drug store the other day, and a bright-eyed, intelligent young woman came to wait upon me. I handed her a physician's prescription, and lo! the smile froze on her pretty lips, and a little wave of perplexity succeeded it.

"I—er—the prescription clerk is not in at present," she said doubtfully. "If you are not in a hurry"—

She hesitated, and to relieve her evident embarrassment I replied that I could wait.

"You do not 'fill' prescriptions?" I asked, carelessly.

"Oh, no," she answered, as emphatically as though I had asked her if she ruled an empire. "I have been in the store three years and understand everything else, but I never handle the drugs."

I cannot understand why more women have not turned to the study of pharmacy. It is an occupation to which they seem particularly adapted, requiring steady habits, clear brains, education, self-reliance and a light delicate touch. Yet, when the principal of Couch school the other day announced to the scholars that a certain young lady was going to leave them to enter the school of pharmacy many eyes grew round with curiosity and amazement.

There seems to be a predisposition in the minds of girls who are trying to decide upon a "career" to cast about for something easy; something that may be learned quickly, and which will not have too much responsibility about it. I fear they want something temporary—a work that will carry them along easily until they can make a good marriage, and which may then be cast aside like an old glove.

Now, that girl, bright and attractive as she was, will always be a flat failure. One who could be possessed of such natural and practical advantages for learning, and yet, at the end of three years, not even dream of "handling the drugs," has not one of the qualities which contribute to success. Five years hence we will find her either married to some harmless young man who parts his hair in the middle and uses white rose on his handkerchief, or still contentedly selling pretty sundries from the show cases, and not bothering her head about the drugs.

But girls, to be a thoroughly competent pharmacist and druggist, is something of which you may be proud. It means not only that you have a fair education, but also that you have given some years, at least, to study and thought and scientific experiment.

But don't undertake pharmacy with any uncertain, half way notions. Make up your mind that you will wash bottles if necessary, when you secure your first situation, that is no degradation. You think nothing of washing dishes for your mother.

If you wish to undertake it, there are no obstacles in the road to a successful and interesting work in pharmacy that may not be rolled aside by a girl who is intelligent and self-reliant, and who is willing to study and to work.—*Ella Higginson in West Shore.*

THE POPULATION OF AFRICA.

And under the name of the Independent State of Congo its government was organized after the most approved methods of Belgian administration, and it entered fully equipped into the family of nations. There is within its area which, as said, is thirty-three times that of Belgium, a population of 450 whites, about one-half State officials and employes, and the estimated number of natives within its borders is about 40,000,000; and in the whole Congo basin is estimated at a out 50,000,000.

Africa is about three times the area of Europe, or 12,000,000 square miles, and some writers estimate it to contain about an equal population—325,000,000 souls. The enormous trade developing there comes mainly from the narrow selvage which separates the mountains from the sea. It is a great basin composed of plateaus, gradually ascending to 7000 feet at some of the central lakes. It has four great river systems: on the west the Congo, second only to the Amazon in the volume of its waters, and the Niger; on the north the Nile; on the east