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An Omaha paper has characterized some of Talmage's lurid sentences "Oratorical delirium tremens."

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BEATRICE.

Dante, sole standard of the heaven and height, Beheld and heard one saying: "Behold me well. I am, I am Beatrice!" Heaven and hell Kept silence, and the lightning light Of all the stars was darkness in his sight. Whose eyes beheld her eyes again, and fell Shame-stricken. Since her soul took flight to dwell In heaven six hundred years have taken flight. And now that heavenliest part of earth whereon Shines yet their shadow as once their presence shone. To her bears witness for his sake, as he For hers bare witness when her face was gone; No slave, no hospice now for grief; but free From shore to mountain and from Alp to sea. —Algeron Charles Swinburne in Athenaeum.

THE CATACOMBS.

The 8th of November, 1873, must forever remain memorable in the record of my life. It was the last day on which visitors were permitted to descend into the catacombs of Paris, and I had with great difficulty procured permission from the chief engineer for a small party, consisting of three gentlemen and three ladies (all English), a professional guide and myself to make the subterranean pilgrimage. To my companions I have stated word for word what I am about to write, and they are ready, if my narrative is challenged, to verify those portions of which they are cognizant by affidavit or otherwise.

I shall now proceed to relate what happened, without attempting any embellishment, letting the plain facts speak for themselves. And, first, it is necessary to dwell for one moment on a little incident which has an important bearing, as will be seen hereafter. A few days before I had seen a little old woman feeding the English sparrows in the Tuileries garden. She broke up a loaf of bread, threw the crumbs into the air, and the timid things caught them flying, as they do insects. They were so tame they would eat out of the good woman's hand. She was very poor, worked at some place far away to the north of the Tuileries, and lodged far to the south; yet she never fails to visit the gardens, and spare a loaf of her daily bread to her feathered pets.

Now I had planned a visit to the gardens on Nov. 8 to try my hand at the birds, and had provided myself with two small loaves of bread, for which I gave ten centimes. I calculated that I should have time enough to do this before the carriages came to drive us to the Catacombs. Various matters, however, delayed me, and I had to give up this part of the programme, but I kept the bread in the pocket of my overcoat, meaning to bestow it on some beggar instead of the sparrows.

We started at 12:30 from the Grand hotel, and drove rapidly to the Barriere d'Enfer and alighted in a courtyard, where we found two or three hundred persons waiting for the opening of the low browed door which gives access to the catacombs in that quarter of the city. There are about seventy different staircases for the same purpose scattered through Paris. Here each person was provided with a candle fixed in the end of a pine stick, with a small circle of cardboard to serve as a tray and catch the drops of grease. Each guide formed his party into single file, and enjoined the members to keep together, and to be very careful of their footing as they went down into the dark depths below.

Now here occurred the first strange incident of this memorable day. A man joined our party wearing the dress of the Undertakers' company—that is, a cocked hat like the first Napoleon's, a black coat trimmed with silver lace, high boots and a black overcoat with a large cape. He was very thin, and his clothes hung about him like a shroud on a skeleton.

I shall never forget his face as he turned and looked at me. The skin was like parchment, the cheeks hollow and the eyes luminous and deep set in cavernous orbits. The look he gave me thrilled to the very marrow of my bones, and when he saw the effect it produced he smiled, disclosing a set of yellow teeth, with an expression so sinister, so weird, so fatal, and yet so sad, that I could not help saying to myself, "This is Death!"

I was so overcome that I could not challenge his assumed right of joining our party. In a word, he had completely magnetized and paralyzed me. What was strange, from time to time a lady of our party turned and chatted with me, apparently unconscious of the black figure and terrible face intruded between us.

And again, when the guide counted us aloud he called out five—the number of our original party. He, too, was then as unconscious of the presence of the stranger as the lady to whom I have alluded. Was I mad? In this perturbed state of mind I began the descent of the catacombs.

The stone staircase was spiral, coiling down like a petrified serpent, along walls slimy and humid. We had lighted our candles, but the change from the glare of daylight to this cavernous gloom prevented our seeing anything, and we had to grope our perilous way. Suddenly an icy whisper, wafted on a poisonous breath, entered my ear like a poniard.

"Strange things have happened in the catacombs, sir. The dead resent intrusion on the last resting place given them after the world has violated their first sanctuary. Sometimes they insist on the living sharing their hard bed with them. Some men who have come down here have never seen the pleasant light of day again."

"I believe, sir," I replied, in as indifferent a tone as I could assume, "that owing to the precautions of the authorities no such accidents have occurred of late years."

"I am glad you think so," was the reply, followed by a sneering, Mephistophelian laugh—what the French call ricanement.

A dead silence fell upon our party. We were walking steadily onward, sometimes walking on loose planks, our weights sending up jets of water, but generally on a dry and solid stone pathway.

The guide held up his flaring torch to the low ceiling.

"Look at that," he said, "that broad, black

line, with here and there a pointed arrow. That is the clew to the catacombs. So long as we follow that we are safe."

We soon came upon the relics of the dead. The galleries through which we passed, about nine feet in height, were walled on either side with human bones, piled up as regularly as bales in a wholesale draper's, and arranged with that artistic taste which the French display in all they do.

The walls of bones were surmounted by a ghastly cornice of grinning skulls. The mortal remains of millions of human beings were here gathered from the old cemeteries of Paris when necessity compelled the dead to give way to the living.

The Cemetery of the Innocents, that of St. Medard, of St. Laurent and others have contributed their quota. Here the bone of prelate and prince, duke and peer, lay side by side with those of peasant and proletarian, thief and rag picker. Equality and fraternity! These words were fully realized in this gloomy mausoleum.

All the skulls and bones are of a dark mahogany color, for years and years have passed since they were clothed with flesh.

At intervals there are marble tablets, with inscriptions in Latin, French, Greek, Norse and other languages, gathered from the works of preachers and poets, speaking of the vanity of human pursuits, the worthlessness of wealth, the certainty of death, the hope of immortality. At one point of our pilgrimage we came to a chapel, with the altar surrounded by the silent but eloquent memorials of humanity. Miles of the dead! How emphatic the lesson this spectacle conveyed!

To the right and left innumerable galleries branched off, access being debarred by iron chains drawn across the entrances.

I had lingered a little behind my party to transcribe an inscription, the man in black keeping close to my side. He seemed to have taken me under his protection and patronage.

"I can show you something these hiring guides know nothing about," he said, "for I alone know the secrets of the Catacombs."

He lifted one of the chains which crossed the mouth of a side gallery from the staples, and moving down the passage turned and said, "Follow me!"

I have said that this mysterious being had magnetized me. I was certain of it now, for though I was anxiously desirous of following my party I could not resist his command.

He led me away down the passage, and thence into other side passages, winding and turning. I lifted my torch to the ceiling, and saw to my dismay that there were no black lines, no guiding arrows on the roof. In this crisis my will began to reassert itself.

"Take me back to my party instantly." Instead of doing so the stranger snatched my candle from my hand, extinguished it with a breath—he carried no light himself—and flung me from him with such violence that I stumbled and fell.

As I rose to my feet I heard his voice in the distance calling out, "Strange things have happened in the Catacombs, sir. Find your way out of them if you can. Good-night."

"Stay!" I exclaimed in agony. "Do not leave me here to perish! Save me, if you have the heart of a man!"

"I never listen to prayer or appeal," he replied, with his hideous, sneering laugh. "I am pitiless as death."

And the echoes gave back the awful word—death! till a more dreadful scene followed.

I was alone in darkness, abandoned to the most horrible fate the imagination can picture.

What was to be done? What could be done in such a terrible crisis? My party would miss me, it is true, and a search would be made for me; but a regiment of men might seek for days in this maze of labyrinthine galleries without success. I must try and help myself. I remembered that I had in my pocket two boxes of waxed matches, each one of which would burn ten or twenty seconds. I lighted one, and by its feeble light ascertained where I was. I was in one of the galleries of the quarries, and just beside me yawned a black abyss of unknown depth, into which a single unvarying step might have precipitated me.

By keeping close to the wall I could avoid this and similar pitfalls. So I groped my way along. The passage wound and turned. The horror of darkness was so great that I sacrificed another match; but it would not do to be so lavish. To describe my sensations would be utterly impossible. My brain reeled, and I was on the very verge of madness, if not past it, when I realized the fact that I was lost in the Catacombs.

But a few hours since I was in the full enjoyment of health and life, sharing the gayeties of Paris, anticipating no evil, and now to die of starvation in this horrible cavern! I thought of home and its dear ones, my comfortable house in Bedford square, my peaceful occupation there, my books, my easel, my photographic apparatus.

Why did the spirit of adventure tempt me away from all the blessings that Providence vouchsafed to me, to wander in foreign lands? Then my whole life passed in review before me, with its many vicissitudes, its sins of omission and commission, and the faces of the loved and lost came to me with the smiles and tears of the olden time.

After hours of fruitless wandering I sat down exhausted and hopeless. I was almost surprised to find myself hungry. Then I remembered the bread I had provided for the little birds in the Tuileries garden. I took one of the small loaves and swallowed a few mouthfuls. The reader will be surprised to learn that after this I felt sleepy. I was astonished myself to find that I was nodding. So I spread my thick cloak on the floor, and wrapping myself up in it was soon fast asleep.

I cannot tell how long my slumber lasted. I woke, however, to renew my struggles at escape. I lit match after

match, and called aloud for help, till my voice was utterly exhausted. Surely I must have been missed, and a search must be going on for me? Alas! alas! no one responded to my call. No footsteps but my own echoed through those dismal galleries.

But now a new craving assailed me—thirst, more cruel than hunger. Lack of water kills quicker than lack of food. I no longer thought of escaping from my living grave. My only cry was for water, water! But this want was soon supplied. The sacrifice of a few more matches revealed to me a little stream exuding from the walls. I glued my lips to it, and though the flavor was nauseous, yet never in the heat of summer had a goblet of iced champagne been more delicious to my palate!

How long a time I passed in my dismal prison house it is impossible to say. Days, nights—who can measure them under such circumstances? Finally I had exhausted my last crumb, and starvation stared me in my face. How could I now sustain life? Oddly enough I just then remembered the legend of the Beaumanoir arms.

Beaumanoir was a gallant French character of the olden time, who, single handed, contended with a score of English knights. Covered with wounds, he asked his squire for water, but water was not to be had. "Drink thy blood, Beaumanoir!" was the reply of the squire, and "Boire ton sang, Beaumanoir," became afterward the motto of the family. Before I died I could open a vein with my knife, and imitate the example of the gallant Paladin.

But first I would make a desperate attempt to find an outlet. Every match had now been burned, and I had to work in utter darkness. Frenzied and desperate, I rushed from gallery to gallery, leaping the chains where they impeded my progress. At last I thought I encountered a current of fresh air. I seized what I conjectured to be a thigh bone projecting from a pile of them and gave it a wrench.

In an instant a mass of bones and skulls gave way, and rolled down on me in a thundering avalanche, while a voice exclaimed, "The intruder who invades the sanctuary of the dead shall perish by the dead!"

The horror of the catastrophe overwhelmed me, and I lost my consciousness. When I recovered I was lying in my bed in the Grand hotel, with the sun shining on the glass gallery opposite my window. There was a tap at my door. I sprang up, opened it and admitted my traveling companion.

"Well, old fellow," said he, "how did you sleep after our visit to the Catacombs yesterday?"

"Yesterday?" I echoed.
"Yes. I had the nightmare."
"But how did I escape?" I asked.
"Escape? What do you mean by escaping? You rode home in the carriage with me and the ladies."
"But that undertaker who thrust himself into our party?"
"There was no undertaker, my boy. You must have been dreaming."
"Not at all, unless I was dreaming wide awake."

"People sometimes do that."
"You did not observe anything queer about me in the Catacombs?"
"Not at all. I thought you were unusually lively and wide awake."
Then I told him my story as I have related it.

He shook his head.
"Queer things have happened in the Catacombs, sir," he said, "to quote the words of your mysterious friend, philosopher and guide. But I wouldn't advise you to let your fancies run away with you, for there is a place near Paris called Charenton—a madhouse—and when a fellow gets too queer in his upper story his friends feel obliged to pack him in a straitjacket, and send him down there for medical treatment. Don't impose the unpleasant task on me. And now come and breakfast with us at the Cafe Anglais."

This is the way in which the strangest occurrences of life are treated by our matter-of-fact friends. For my part I shall always insist that my visit to the Catacombs was one of the "Mysteries of Paris," whatever others may say about my laboring under an hallucination.—New York World.

Where Peanuts Grow.

In this country the good peanut states are Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee. The crop in a good year amounts to about 3,000,000 bushels or 70,000,000 pounds, having grown to these proportions from an output of less than 500,000 bushels in 1873. Arkansas and Kansas are also peanut growing states. California produces a good crop, but the soil is so rich that the peanut grows large and rank with a shell so thick that it seriously affects the roasting process. The states first named may therefore be considered the sole producers of peanuts for the market. So important has the peanut become that in some sections of the three states it is the principal crop and chief reliance of the farmer.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

In a Different Set.

"Now pray for Susie Bates," said Mrs. Simral to 6-year-old Flossie, who was saying her prayers. "Susie is quite sick."

"Why, mamma," said Flossie, "I can't pray for her. She doesn't belong to our crowd."—Epoch.

The University of Berlin, with its 6,000 students and scores of famous professors, has a capital of but \$750,000. Its largest endowment, that of the Countess Bese, is only \$150,000. Nevertheless it is the seat of the highest German learning, and claims to have the ablest corps of instructors of all the world's schools.

The grapple plant of the Kalahari desert is said to be a real vegetable curiosity. In its general appearance it looks more like a starfish than a plant, and each ray or arm is tipped with barbs, which when fastened to the wool of sheep have to be cut out, that being the only way of removing them.

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