

SIMPLE CREMATION.

Orthodox Hindoos Burn Their Dead in the Open Air.

Strange and Sanitary Mode of Disposing of Bodies Which Has Been in Vogue in India for Thousands of Years.

Although we are beginning to believe more and more every year in cremation, and think ourselves accordingly advanced, the Hindoos have practiced it for thousands of years. The funeral pile of a rajah sometimes costs lacs of rupees; a Hindoo body is sometimes burned when three rupees cover the entire expenses. The rich Hindoo may be somewhat exclusive. The Hindoo masses do everything simply and openly. They bathe out of doors, they pray out of doors, they cook out of doors, they die out of doors, and their bodies are burned out of doors. There are three burning ghats in Calcutta.

A writer to the Pall Mall Budget tells very entertainingly of a visit he made to one of the cheapest and most primitive of these three.

Just as he entered into the inclosure where a burning ghat was in full operation, there was a crack—a sharp retort like a pistol. The heat had just broken through a dead man's skull. It was the last human part to protest against the extinguishment of death.

The funeral pile of a poor Hindoo looks like an ordinary kitchen yard woodpile. But if you go up close to it, you discover something very like a human form—a glowing, charred mass, distinguished from every other shape, animate or inanimate. For the Hindoos literally purify their dead by fire. The body is burned until absolutely nothing remains but a handful of ashes—ashes wholly free from my unclean or poisonous matter. As the writer was closely observing the glowing pile, a new body was brought in and the rite begun.

Two coolies carried the body upon a rude litter, woven from coarse grasses, and held together by outlines of bamboo. Two of the dead man's brothers followed, chatting pleasantly. Four stout sticks of wood were driven upright into the ground, at the corners of an imaginary parallelogram about six feet by two. Between these four



A HINDOO BURNING GHAT

posts were loosely laid sticks of dry, cheap wood. When the pile was a little more than three feet high the body was laid upon it. A dirty piece of crash, of the quality the coolies wear about their loins, partly wrapped the dead. One of the brothers stepped up and poured about four ounces of oil over the body. This insured a quicker cremation, but was something of a luxury, and not a universal practice. The oil must have cost about three pice. The other brother paid the coolies, who shouldered the light empty litter, and marched gayly out.

More wood was piled upon the dead. A thin stick was lighted at the other funeral pile, which was now flaming finely, the second pile was lighted, and the cremation of the newcomer was begun. The two brothers appeared very interested in the igniting, and decidedly pleased when it was accomplished. They squatted down upon the ground, just so far from the pile that they might feel that their scant, filthy garments were fairly safe from the sparks, but near enough to watch all the changing phases of the cremation, and to see easily when it was consummated.

They untied a dirty rag from about a small bundle one of them had brought with them. They took out a small earthen bowl. It was clean and shining, and so was the brass chalice each lifted from his filthy turbaned head. The chalice held water. The bowl held curry and rice. They fell to eating with great gusto. And pray, why not? They were eating to live. Their brother was burning to live—to live in Hindoo paradise. From the Hindoo point of view this state was far more blessed.

The cremation which was in full blast when the writer arrived was finally completed. Two distinct kinds of ashes were left. The human ashes were carefully gathered into an old chalice. The authorities do not allow those ashes to be thrown into the river, and they are never thrown there in the presence of Europeans. The ashes of the wood were swept swiftly away. The bits of wood not quite burned were frugally collected to be utilized in the next pile.

H. H. Apology and All.

The following genuine "bull" story is told by a New York merchant: An old town customer to whom several bills had been shipped discovered, by mistake, a mistake in the bill, and thought him to a considerable amount. He wrote to the merchant of the city without delay and the letter was duly received. It dwelt at length on carelessness in general, and particularly in the case of this bill, waxing indignant over the foolish mistake and demanding a correct bill at once. At the foot of the letter was a hastily-written postscript to this effect: "Since writing the above I have reexamined your bill and find it correct after all."

DONE BY LEVERAGE.

How Some of Gaza's Wonderful Feats Are Performed.

T. H. Briggs, the Englishman, Explains the Scientific Basis of Many Tricks of Strength—Easily Pushes Two Huge Firemen Backward.

T. H. Briggs, the Englishman who recently made an expose of some of the phenomenal feats performed by Gaza, the female Sandow, showing that they were easily explained on the scientific principle of the lever, recently gave an interesting illustration of the same principle when applied to draft horses.

Mr. Briggs performed some feats of strength that would be thought incredible outside a theater or a circus, but he explained them all on scientific principles.

He called out two of the largest and strongest firemen present. They both grasped a pitchfork handle about eight feet long. Mr. Briggs, who weighs less than one hundred and sixty pounds and is undersized at that, stood opposite. He balanced himself on one foot and then, taking hold of the handle, told them to push. He easily pushed them backward, merely requiring that they push downward while he pushed upward, thereby getting the benefit of their weight.

He next grasped the hand of the biggest fireman and told him to pull. The giant jerked him half way across the room. He had a spectator mount his back and then tried the pull. This time he pulled the fireman over with comparative ease. All this was interesting as an exhibition, but seemed like jugglery or sleight of hand. Mr. Briggs' purpose was, however, to illustrate the principle and law of the lever. He explained that it was weight, not strength, that counted in the push or pull.

He next brought out a number of models of draft horses and carts attached and showed how the same principle helped or impeded a draft horse while pulling a load. If the traces were inclined so that the wagon end was lower than the horse's collar the horse gained additional weight and could pull more, and vice versa. This increased weight of the horse, he explained, was an advantage only when starting a heavy load, after that it would only fatigue the animal sooner. The object, then, was obviously an arrangement that enabled the horse to have added weight when starting a heavy load and only its natural weight or less when moving along with it.

When he had made this clear to his hearers Mr. Briggs invited them outside to see a vehicle equipped with an automatic arrangement of the shafts and trace attachments that accomplished what was wanted. He showed how the horse hitched to this could start a heavier load than with ordinary traces and how the attachment then adjusted itself so that the horse could travel without increasing its weight by a pull on the traces.

The vehicle was placed on an inclined plane, but none present could start it by pulling on the shafts. By taking hold of the adjustment invented by Mr. Briggs, which extended along the shaft but joined the vehicle at a lower point, this was easily done. It was soon clear to those present that pulling the vehicle by Mr. Briggs' appliance was vastly easier than by the ordinary method—the shafts.—Chicago Times.

GREENLAND Doves.

The Little Auk of the North Pole Neighborhood.

A few weeks ago a very odd-looking bird was seen on the ocean beach at Stonington, Conn. It is a pity that it could not have been caught, instead of being shot as it was, for a local ornithologist discovered it to be a little auk that had strayed away from its home within the arctic circle.

The man who shot it had it mounted, and set it up in his home. It is as big as a full-blown "snowball" blossom, plump as a pullet, with little, short wings. About its head, neck and shoulders is a cape of black, glossy feathers, while its breast is as white as snow. Its dark wings are tipped with white patches, and its bill is as black as coal. It is web-footed, and, from the tip of its bill to the end of its tail feathers, it is eight inches long.

Mariners who sail in Arctic waters call the little auk the Greenland dove. It especially loves the snowy region invested by the arctic circle, and ornithologists say that if the north pole should ever be discovered flocks of these little birds will be found in the neighborhood.

In spite of its short wings the little auk travels through the air like a rifle-shot; it dives expertly and can swim under water. It is perfectly at home whether aloft or ashore, and when weary of sea-faring tucks its head under its wing and goes to sleep, "rocked in the cradle of the deep." It subsists on fish and small crabs and lays one egg of a pale greenish blue, like the northern sea.—Golden Days.

PENMANSHIP OF TELEGRAPHERS

A Curious Instance of the Revelations of Handwriting.

"An expert telegrapher can always be told by his writing," said an operator the other day. "No matter how different the writing of expert operators may be, there is a similarity that can always be distinguished by a fellow manipulator of the keys. It seems that there are certain muscles of the hand capable of quicker motion than the others. A telegrapher who is compelled to take down thirty to fifty words a minute develops these muscles and makes them do most of the work. So the writing of expert operators has a peculiar resemblance, which is particularly noticeable to persons who follow the business. A telegrapher is compelled to adopt a different style of writing from that usually taught in schools. In the latter beauty is what is most desired; in the case of the telegrapher, he must have speed, and great speed; too, or he will be thrown aside. The other day a fellow operator and myself saw a postal card. I had only glanced at it when I remarked that it was the writing of a man who had once been a telegraph operator. My companion agreed, and further suggested that he had received his education in a railroad office, inasmuch as he dated his postal in the right-hand corner, whereas a commercial operator always writes the date in the left-hand corner, as the blanks are made in that form. Yes, and he has been a bookkeeper; for, although the figures in the table given were written hastily, they were written on perfect lines, added my friend. This all came from our noticing the class distinction in the writing of a telegrapher. As there was no name signed to the postal, it merely giving a list of shipments, we were anxious to find out whether our judgment was correct. We asked the man who received it who had written it. He gave the name of a now prominent business man who began life as a messenger in a railroad office, then became a telegrapher, next was given a position of trust where bookkeeping was one of his duties, finally launching out for himself in a line entirely foreign to railroading or bookkeeping. The characteristics that had crept into his writing during his early training were still visible. We had guessed the history of the man from his writing."—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

DECEITFUL AND DEADLY.

A Harmless Appearance But Fatal Weapon Used in Mexico.

Harry Armitage, an old Mexican traveler, was in St. Louis the other day on his way to New York, and as he passed up and down the platform of the Union station he chatted with a Republic reporter. Naturally the conversation turned upon the unsettled condition of that country and the guerrilla warfare that is being waged against the administration by the mountain people. During this conversation he suddenly drew from his pocket an object that to all outward appearance was nothing more than an ordinary match box.

As he passed it over to the reporter for inspection, he said: "Do you know that you have in your hands the most



THE BOX.

THE TUSK.

villainous weapon I have ever seen in all my travels. That little silver box contains enough poison to cause the death of a thousand men. If you will touch that little spring just below the lid—Ah! You have it.

"Now, notice that protrusion. That is the tusk of the great diamond-back rattlesnake, one of the family of venomous reptiles so common in the mountains of western United States and Mexico.

"If you will glance at its point you will find that it is slit and that an amberlike matter exudes from it.

"That amber-colored matter is the venom of the reptile, taken from its venom sack, and the Mexicans set these tusks in those handsomely carved silver boxes, and the Mexican ladies carry them as a means of defense against anyone who dares to insult or molest them. One scratch from the point of that terrible tusk means an inoculation of the most deadly virus known to man. The person so inoculated will die a horrible death within seven or eight hours after receiving the wound and not know what has caused his death for to all appearances it is just the scratch of a pin or needle.

"In the hands of an unscrupulous person it would be, productive of more evil than a whole battery of guns. I purchased it from an old Mexican hag in Durango, and I suppose she had stolen it from some lady of caste, but I never have seen anything to equal it as a death-dealing instrument."

"What's your son Josiah doing?" said a neighbor to Farmer Begosh. "Wall," was the reply, "he thinks he's diggin' bait, but he's makin' garden."—Washington Star.

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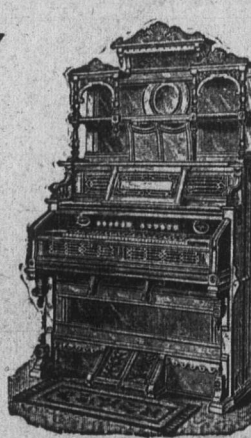
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