

## BREATHING UNDER WATER.

An Explanation of a Famous Diver's Remarkable Feat.

[From the Youth's Companion.]

The length of time during which a person can live under water without the aid of any diving apparatus is a question in dispute among scientific men. Some travelers have told marvellous stories of the natives of Eastern countries who were able to stay ten or fifteen minutes under water, but there can be no doubt that these are absurd exaggerations. It is well known that the ordinary divers for coral, sponge, and pearl oysters do not remain under more than two minutes, and the "men-fish," who exhibit in the museums, do not exceed two minutes and a half.

The doctors differ in their opinion as to the time at which death comes in drowning. Some say in three minutes, others in five, but none set a longer time than this, except the drowning persons faint, when respiration ceases.

A Frenchman, named Lacassagne, has been for some time studying this subject, and the results of his experiments and observations are given in the *Revue Scientifique*. The man upon whom he experimented was a famous Hungarian swimmer named James, who, among other exploits, once swam from Calais to Dover, and had remained under water for four minutes and fourteen seconds.

Before diving, it was observed that he first expelled all the air from his lungs and then took a long breath. After he had been under water for a minute his heart beats became slow, irregular, and feeble. After two minutes and thirty-seven seconds there was a rush of blood to the head and his eyes appeared sunken. Still he continued to breathe and regularly at the rate of twenty respirations a minute, while at the same time the observer noticed that the abdominal cavity diminished greatly in size.

M. Lacassagne believes from this, and from the fact that James was continually swallowing his saliva, that, in drawing the long breath at first, he swallowed a quantity of air, and that the ordinary respiratory channels being closed, he takes into his lungs the air contained in his stomach, and from thence again taken, somewhat purified, into his lungs. That is, in other words, he makes of his stomach a reservoir for air, a fact, which, if true, will account for his ability to remain for such an extraordinary time under water. This process which the diver performs instinctively and mechanically, M. Lacassagne believes can and should be learned by all swimmers, as giving them a far greater endurance under the surface than they now possess.

## A Joke on Cabby.

Did you ever try to play on a cabman that old joke of "the lost sovereign"? It's lots of fun. A friend of mine tried it last summer in London, and succeeded, too, in spite of the rather chaste flavor of this practical joke. He took a "growler" (four-wheel cab) after midnight at Piccadilly circus to go to his lodgings out in Bayswater. Remembering the staleness of the "lost sovereign" dodge, he thought it would hardly "go down" with a bright and cunning London cabby, but resolved to try just for the fun of it. Just as they came in front of a public-house a few doors from his home the "fare" stuck his head out the window and ordered the driver to halt.

"I say, cabby, I've dropped a sov. in the straw on the bottom of the coach. Just pull up at that 'pub' till I run in and get a match so that I can find the coin."

"All right, sir," said the cabby, and pulled up opposite the door of the tavern.

My friend alighted and had taken scarcely three steps in the direction of the "pub" when Mr. Cabby whipped up his horses and flew away into the foggy night, carrying with him (as he supposed) that sovereign snugly concealed in the straw.

The gentleman, having now reached his lodgings and without expense, smiled a smole "like unto the neighing of all Tattersalls," and wickedly gloated over the brilliant success of the ancient sell.—*Kansas City Times*.

## He Started.

A rag-peddler who was driving up Gratiot-ave. yesterday had reached Hastings street when his horse balked. The usual number of smart Alecks were soon on hand with their advice, and one suggestion after another was tried in vain. The horse could neither be pulled nor pushed, and as he was blocking traffic the crowd began to grow very rapidly.

"What is it?" inquired a boy of twelve who pushed his way into the circle.

"Balky horse," answered some one.

"Where's the owner? Here, you man, can't you start this horse?"

"No, he doan' start oop."

"Wait a minute."

The lad ran up the street half a block and pulled a handfull of hay out of a bale at a feed-store, and when he returned he cleared a space in front of the horse, stood off about five feet, and extended his hand. The horse pricked up his ears, his eyes glistened, and he at once advanced and followed the boy around the corner.

"It's according to the hoss," explained the boy as the crowd cheered. "When a hay-fed horse balks he wants fire-crackers under him; when a hoss who is fed on scrap-iron and gravel-road balks, a pinch of hay will lead him all over town."

THERE is one thing to be said for the brass band. It never hangs back and blushes and protests incompetency when it is asked to play.

## THE LITTLE SHOE.

A Strange and Startling Story of the Vast Blue Sea.

Twenty-six years ago a little child toddled from its mother's doorstep on the shores of Halfmoon Bay to its playground on the smooth, pebbly beach, where it was accustomed to pass the sunny hours in innocent play, gathering shiny shells, bright pebbles, and gay sea mosses to carry home to add to its little hoard of treasures. There was no thought of danger in the mother's mind as she saw her little one go with unsteady steps down toward the shore, where the wavelets, lapping on the strand, were throwing up the objects for which the little toddler made a daily search. The hours passed on, and at length the mother, becoming anxious at prolonged absence of her baby, went to the door to call her home. She scanned the long stretch of the beach, but the little one was nowhere to be seen. The tide which was at the ebb when the little one left her home had come in, and there was nothing but white sand to be seen as far as the eye could reach. A search among the neighbors' houses brought no tidings of the little one, and the mother, now thoroughly alarmed, assisted by other members of the family, began an anxious search for the missing babe. The afternoon and evening wore away, and through the night the friends and neighbors kept up the search among the sandhills and shrubs which lined the beach, but without avail. Not a trace could be found of the child.

The hours lengthened into days and the search had been abandoned so far as hopes of finding the child alive were concerned, but still the sorrowing mother made her daily search along the beach where her baby had been wont to play, hoping to find something which would give at least a clue to the fate of her darling. One day, the third or fourth after the disappearance of the child, the mother found a little bundle of clothing, wet and torn by the waves which covered the remains of her little one, the body having been cast up by the sea during the night.

Catching the body up, she ran with it to the little house from which the light seemed to have fled with the loss of the child.

The little body was prepared by tender hands for burial, but it was found that the right foot of the little one was missing. It was supposed that the child had fallen from a reef of rocks which ran out into deep water and had been drowned, and that some fish or sea monster had eaten off the foot. There seemed to be no mystery about the death, and the other children of the family were wont to listen with awe as the mother told in the gloaming how the little sister wandered away from home and was drowned. The children grew up and married and had little ones of their own, and the grandmother told again to a new set of auditors how her little girl baby went out to play one day and was killed by the cruel sea.

Simple as the death of the child seemed at the time, it turns out to have been one of those mysteries of the sea which are only revealed by accident. A short time ago one of the sons of the old lady, and a brother of the lost child, picked up on the beach a piece of a large abalone shell which had been thrown up by the tide. He was attracted by the colors of the shell, and as he turned it to look at the inside he was astonished to find attached to the interior of the shell the perfect representation of a child's shoe. Even the little break in the toe, where the leather had worn away, and every detail was reproduced in the brilliant colors which are characteristic of the interior of the abalone shell.

Little thinking of the mystery revealed by the reproduction by nature of a baby's shoe, the young man carried the shell home as a curiosity. The first person he showed it to was his mother. No sooner did she see the curiosity than she exclaimed:

"It is my baby's shoe! The shoe of my little girl that was lost twenty-six years ago."

The rest of the family ridiculed the idea, but going to a drawer, such as most mothers use in their house, she produced the mate to the shoe. A careful comparison showed that the lime-incrusted shoe in the shell and the memento of the dead child, carefully kept by a loving mother through the long years that she had mourned her little one, were undoubtedly mates.

The mystery of the child's death was revealed at last. Any one who knows the nature and habits of the abalone can readily understand what occurred. The little one had ventured out in the rocky reef, and in her clambering had slipped from the slimy, moss-covered rocks into the shallow water below.

Perhaps nothing more than a wetting would have happened to her, but as fate would have it her tiny foot slipped between the rock and the edge of a huge abalone which was clinging to the rock. The shell at once closed on the tender ankle, and the little one was a prisoner, to be held till the rising tide swept over her and put an end to the innocent life. It may be that she was thrown into the water and held by the vice-like grip of the univalve so that her agony was brief, or she may have been held until the slowly rising waters choked her feeble cries for help.

Such cases are not unknown. A few years ago a Chinese was frequently seen in San Diego whose right hand, with the exception of the thumb and forefinger, was gone. The story told by his mates was that while hunting abalones on the reef he had incautiously inserted his fingers under the sharp edge of an abalone shell. Before he could withdraw them the shell had closed down. He lay on the rock held by the hand till the tide began to come in. Seeing his danger, and realizing that he had only

himself to depend upon for aid, he managed to get out his knife with his left hand and by dint of hard work hacked off the imprisoned fingers and released himself.

On another occasion a gentleman connected with one of the newspapers was wandering with some friends on the reefs near Cyprus Point at Monterey. His companions had gone ahead, and as he hurried on to overtake them he slipped in a hole on the reef. His foot went into the mouth, as it may be called, of an abalone. To his horror he was unable to extricate himself. Fortunately the other members of the party were not too far away to hear him and they returned to his rescue. One of the party stripped and plunged into the pool, and with a large knife, cut the cartilage with which the mollusk held the shell clasped to the rock. Had help not been at hand he would have been drowned by the incoming tide, and in all probability his fate would forever have remained a mystery.

## STORIES ABOUT WASHINGTON.

The New Congressmen and the Jokes Played on Them.

An employe of the House has been telling me about a new Congressman from the South, who came walking into the hall, looked around for awhile with an air of ownership as if he had just bought the Capital and was pleased with his purchase, and then inquired where the vacant desks were. When told they were all vacant he seemed gratified and asked how they were assigned.

"Every member selects for himself," was the reply.

"Which have been taken?"

"None. Nobody has been in to choose yet."

"Wa'al, that's lucky, ain't it; so I'm the first man on the ground;" and walking away with a satisfied air he picked out a seat nearly in front of the clerk's desk and observed:

"I reckon I'll roost here."

The word was passed around among the messengers and pages, and, as usual, they were ready for a lark. A card was cut, upon which the new Honorable wrote his name, and then one of the boys shoved it in the frame made for the purpose. Next they showed him to the stationery room, where he inquired into the perquisites of a legislator and seemed greatly pleased at the idea of having so much fine letter paper and sundries at his disposal. He gave each of the pages a pocket-knife and the stationery clerk put him up an assortment of all kinds and sizes of paper and envelopes, which he packed away in his desk. Then he sat down to write a letter home and "tell the folks all about it." Next week he will discover what the boys were laughing at.

I heard about another member of the freshman class at the Capital who discovered the House restaurant, ordered a square meal, ate it with great gusto, and was then almost knocked out of his chair by having a cashier's check presented to him. He had previously taken a bath and offered to pay for it, but was told that it was a free Government institution. He naturally concluded that a great Nation—spelled with a big N—that bathed its servants and paid men to rub them down, fed them as well, and thought the waiter was trying to humbug him.

"Isn't this the members' restaurant?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the waiter.

"Well, I'm a member from So-and-So."

"Can't help that, sir; members pay just like other folks."

Well, it all ended by the new member hauling out his wallet and in a cautious way settling the bill, but it will take some time for the idea to get through his head that while the Government provides every opportunity for its legislators to be clean, it has not reached that point yet where it proposes to feed them.

## The Half-Priced Boy.

That fall Mr. Wilkins sold his house and tried boarding for the winter. And it would have been very funny, if it had not been very sad, to hear Mrs. Wilkins bargaining for room and board for two, with a little child thrown in.

He was a very small eater, she said, and could easily be fed from her plate, and he would wait and not require an extra seat at table, and sleep on a sofa in her room, so would be no trouble to any one.

So he was included, like a cat or a parrot, with their belongings, and he said not a word, though he held his mother's hand, and read her face with his great blue eyes, while she haggled about him. And she told his father that Harley had outgrown his foolish baby fashion of asking questions.

But he thought! Oh, deep in his mind he thought over the complex mysteries of life.

One night he lay awake on the sofa bed and could not sleep. His head was hot and felt twice its natural size. Soon he began to talk. His mother and his father heard him and said:

"He is dreaming."

But it was they who were dreaming. The child was waking—waking in the morning that has never a noon or a night.

His mother heard his last few words with an agony of remorse that came too late.

"Please, dear God, let me in. I haven't any ticket nor money, an' I'm eight years old and half-price. Nobody wants me. There isn't any place for a little boy without money. If you'll just take me up there I won't be in anybody's way—and I'm—so—tired—I'm—so—tired!"

His head drooped. The flush on his cheek faded—the tired little heart was at rest forever.

## Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

Every family in which books, magazines or newspapers are read, and letters are written, should have an English dictionary. How often is a whole sentence made obscure because the reader does not know or has forgotten the meaning of some word or proper name. How often does a letter-writer hesitate over the correct spelling of some word whose orthographical construction has, for the moment, escaped his memory? And how often do discrepancies arise over the proper pronunciation of this or that word. All these difficulties could be settled in a moment, by the possession of a standard dictionary. Now, the one great work of a similar character, in the English language, is Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, published by G. & C. Merriam & Co., Springfield, Mass. This dictionary contains over 118,000 words, being 5,000 more than are found in any other American work of a similar character. Its 4,000 illustrations cover an immense number of subjects. A space in itself equal to the dimensions of a large volume is devoted to biographical, geographical, and Scripture proper names, noted names and places in fiction, frequently-quoted sayings, found in the Latin, the Greek and modern foreign languages, Christian proper names with their equivalents in other languages, all the abbreviations and contractions used in writing, a classified selection of many hundred pictures, covering a wide range of topics, etc. As an educator in itself, for young and old, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary is certainly without a rival in all the wide domain of English literature.

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