

signed to the dust before the 'vital spark of heavenly flame' has 'quit, oh! quit his mortal frame.' The resulting panic was shown in the number of French wills in which instructions were given to have the testator's heart pierced by a qualified surgeon before the coffin lid was finally screwed down. Curiously enough, this unnecessary fear haunted M. Nobel, the millionaire inventor of dynamite. He, too, had his heart pierced. It was unnecessary, for the ex-dynamite maker was sleeping soundly when the surgeon's steel got beyond the fifth rib.

Various minor scares have occurred since the reading of that paper at the French Academy of Medicine, and the 'buried alive' bogey is still, so to say, over ground. In fact, he is, among some, 'an influential goblin' (as Gilbert would say). And he has led sundry over-timid or eccentric people to form associations for the purpose of making sure that soul and body have dissolved partnership before dust is consigned to dust. One association, founded in New York, had a more practical and commonsense object in view—namely, to secure legislation to make compulsory certain tests to be applied to 'suspected' corpses (as we may term them) before certificates of death are granted or burials are permitted. The ancient Egyptians gave the 'corpse' a chance of walking again among men by making four days the minimum between death and burial. The pagan Roman 'wake' lasted six days; that of the Greeks—like that of our Maoris of rangatira blood—was a festival long drawn out. It lasted eleven days—by which time all reasonable doubts as to the condition of the chief actor in the affair must have been pretty thoroughly set at rest. But, dead or comatose, when we fall into the undertaker's hands, subsequent proceedings, above ground or beneath, will have little interest for us. And over our clay sympathetic friends or neighbours will pass the two trite remarks that (according to 'Mr. Dooley') are the common lot: 'How much did he lave?'—and; 'It's a fine day f'r a walk to th' cimitery.'

In the days of our grandfathers, one of the fears that haunted the dying—and, later on, the 'friends of the corpse'—arose from the operation of the 'resurrection-men' or 'body-snatchers.' For nearly thirty years preceding 1832, this fear was no idle or groundless one. Details of this odious and gruesome occupation are given in Andrews' 'Bygone England' and in Bransby Cooper's 'Life of Sir Astley Cooper.' The occupation of body-snatcher was followed in every part of the British Isles, and for the same purpose—to supply subjects for dissection to the numerous teachers of anatomy that then had the training of budding medicos. Thieves and other such characters were the principals in the business of procuring 'stiffs.' They were aided by the worse class of undertakers, by grave-diggers, and by watchers appointed to guard the bodies. The competition for 'specimens' was very keen, and nine guineas a body was often given to the 'resurrectionist,' besides a 'retainer' of £50 at the beginning of each session of the anatomy school for an exclusive supply. The daring and insolence of the 'profession' knew no bounds, and it was by no means diminished when Sir Astley Cooper and other surgeons exerted themselves to keep convicted 'resurrectionists' out of gaol, or provided funds for the support of them and their families during their imprisonment.

Finally, the exhumers bethought them of an easier plan to secure 'subjects.' A 'dead-drunk' was sold, in a bag, to anatomist Brookes. And finally, in Edinburgh, in 1828, the murders that took place (known as 'Burkings') compelled Parliament to take the matter in hand and to legalise dissection under restrictions regulated by Minister of the Crown. A Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to investigate the matter. Sir Astley was examined by it. He gave some answers that tell their own tale. Here are some specimens:—

'Q.—Does the state of the law actually prevent the teachers of anatomy from obtaining the body of any person, which, in consequence of some peculiarity of structure, they may be particularly desirous of procuring?'

'A.—The law does not prevent our obtaining the body of any individual if we think proper; for there is no person, let his situation in life be what it may, whom, if I were disposed to dissect, I could not obtain.'

Another question was then put, and Sir Astley replied as follows: 'The law only enhances the price, and does not prevent the exhumation; nobody is secured by the law—it only adds to the price of the subject.'

The upshot of the Committee's report was the legalisation of dissection, which was permitted only after a proper certificate of death and the cause of death, and only to schools licensed by the Government for the purposes of 'anatomizing.' This law greatly raised the credit of the medical schools and of the medical profession, and it ended what has been aptly called 'a startling chapter in the history of civilisation.'

That 'Milliard'

In the fifteenth century there lived in Rome a satirical 'ciabattino' or cobbler whose name was Pasquino. Pasquino bit with mordant satire the public men of his time. When he 'passed out,' other satirists wrote their lampoons upon persons and things, signed them 'Pasquino,' and pasted them to the pedestal of a statue that still stands in one of the streets, and is known as Don Pasquino. Collections of the most famous of these lampoons have been published, and among them are many of extraordinary brilliancy and historic fame. Pasquino and his imitators have given to the world the word 'pasquinade' and its foreign equivalents. Some cases in Paris have lately been giving a distant imitation of the compressed and concentrated mordant of the Roman satire. A rumour (said to be inspired) was set afloat to the effect that the French Government was about to seize and plunder the French religious property in Rome, including the beautiful and historic church known as San Luigi dei Francesi.

The news was contradicted by the Government. But (says 'Rome') 'just as the "ballon d'essai" of the further intended confiscation was launched the following notice was pasted all over Paris and in many other places in France:

“Lost, between the Chamber of Deputies and the Palace of Justice, a Milliard (the alleged Milliard or £40,000,000, of the plundered Religious Orders), promised October 28, 1900, by Waldeck-Rousseau, Minister, President of the Council, who declared that the confiscation of the property of the religious would mean a Milliard of francs for a fund for old-age pensions for laborers.

“To-day the liquidation is over, the congregations dispersed, their charitable and educational institutions destroyed.

“The workingmen's pensions have not yet come—there is no sign of their coming.

“And of the Milliard! Of the one thousand million francs (£40,000,000) that were promised us, only nine millions (£360,000) have entered the treasury. The rest has slipped through the fingers of the pretended friends of the people, who have taken good care to think of themselves before thinking of pensions for the aged.

“So,” adds ‘Rome,’ ‘less than one per cent. of the milliard has been rescued from the “liquidators,” and in the meanwhile the poor have been deprived of the many beneficent organisations with which the religious congregations had studded France. Certainly it was not the time for extending the liquidation to Italy.’

The loss on Waipori, Dunedin's electrical power undertaking, for the ten months ended March 31 last, was £4380.

I am going to have my train through to Auckland at the end of the year,’ said the Hon. W. Hall-Jones to a ‘Dominion’ representative the other day. The Minister for Railways had just returned from his first visit of inspection of the Main Trunk Line since his trip to the Old Country. ‘There is a great deal of work to be done yet,’ he said, but the staff are going ahead solidly; are keenly interested, and quite pleased to be identified with the completion of the line by Christmas.’

QUALITY comes before Price! Tasteless Tea is worthless. Houdai Lanka Quality is unexcelled; its value unsurpassed.

THE Popularity of Houdai Lanka Tea is Phenomenal. Last month the sales were the largest yet. Quality tells.