

domestic habits generally than we possess to pass any judgment on the matter, but, unless this newer England of ours differs very much in its methods from its venerable prototype, the minds of men should be much more occupied in attempting to get rid of one wife than in a desire to add three to the number. We do not know, in fact, that even an adoption of Moslem customs could bring us to more shame in the eyes of a rightly judging world than has been incurred by England herself owing to recent events—and to a long course of such.

It would appear that the methods of piety are almost quite beyond finding out. A young girl has **A QUEER UNDERTAKING.** just died in Queensland, where she was sent for her health, whose occupation it had been for some time previous to her death, to work for the conversion of the whole police force of Victoria, by sending them monthly packages of "Gospel papers." History does not record what the motive was that turned the mind of this maiden in the first instance to the police force; nor why they alone of all the servants of the Government became the object of her solicitude. Possibly, however, no such grand idea had entered the head of any devoted Christian, since that year in which Miss Whateley, a daughter of the late Archbishop of Dublin, undertook the conversion of the whole garrison of Malta by means of a publication known as the *Gospel Trumpet*, and whose dissemination she promoted through the hands of a pious sergeant, stationed on the island. But that was a great many years ago, and the fruits that have since been apparent in the British army have not been of any important consideration. The chief fruit, perhaps, was the amusement caused when the event came out at a certain trial held in Dublin, in which the Archbishop and his family cut rather a droll figure.—It related to a quarrel between one Captain Stuart and his wife, who had been an inmate of Dr. Whateley's household.—It may, however, very well be questioned as to whether a police force of unexceptionable piety would be of as much service to the community in general as the force as it exists at present,—we will not say in a condition past praying for, but of no particular evangelical power.—Meantime, there is nothing at all to astonish us in the premature death of this extremely pious young person.—With all the sins of the force upon her mind and nothing to combat them but bundles of tracts, it is only a wonder that she survived even for a single day. But we fear her place in the annals of the Colony will be only that of affording another illustration of the freaks of which human nature, when unwisely directed, is capable.

## A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

(From the *Shamrock*.)

(Concluded.)

Then an idea occurred to my mind which brought with it a gleam of hope. I thought it possible that by applying my strength to the weight itself, I might be able to impart to it by slow degrees a swinging motion, like that of a pendulum; and this being continued, might at length bring the ponderous mass in contact with the door, and so burst it open. Raising myself from the floor of the cell, upon which I had again sunk down, I applied my strength to the weight, and by exerting all my energy in a succession of rhythmical impulses I gradually succeeded in imparting to it an almost imperceptible movement. Gradually this increased; and, but for an unforeseen circumstance, the scheme might have been successful. But I presently found that the weight did not hang exactly in the centre of the shaft. The consequence was that it struck the wall opposite the door before it reached the door itself. The extent of its swing being thus checked, my utmost efforts failed to bring it into contact with the door. The attempt had, therefore, to be abandoned, and hope again died within me.

Hope died within me. And now my sensations were those of extreme horror and dismay. I for the first time felt the certainty of my fate. A deadly sickness seized me. In a paroxysm of despair I flung myself again upon the floor of my prison, and lay there without motion.

I will not dwell upon the long hours that followed—those hours of more than mortal agony of mind. It happened that I had lately been reading an account of a traveller who had perished in a quicksand. The time of the accident was on a summer evening, when the sun was sinking, and the lonely shore was bathed in the rosy light. The spot where it occurred was well-known to me—and after reading the account I had endeavoured, in that unreasoning spirit which sometimes leads the mind to dwell on horrors, to realize in fancy the sensations of the victim, as inch by inch and foot by foot, in full sight of the free ocean and glorious sun, the treacherous quicksand drew him downward—downward—to his doom.

What the sensations attending such a death must be I could then but feebly realise. I know them now.

I know them now. The sensations of those who have stood face to face with death for hours, watching with starting eyes his slow approach, are to me no mystery. But the mind of man has mercifully been so ordered that agony prolonged beyond a certain point ends in numbing the power of feeling. Thus it is that criminals condemned to execution often sleep soundly and eat with appetite: a fact which seems amazing to those who consider how comparatively slight a degree of mental distress has power to rob the night of rest and to turn the daintiest food to poison. They do not reflect that mental

agony in its extremity ceases to be felt. But thus it is—and thus it was with me.

I believe also that the air of the shaft must have acted upon me with some stupefying or bewildering influence, like that of the vapour which often gathers at the bottom of old wells. The agitation of my mind gradually gave place to a strange feeling of indifference. The peril under which I lay ceased to trouble me, and at last no longer occupied my thoughts.

I began instead to be curiously disturbed by another circumstance, very trivial in itself; by a sound which reached my senses from somewhere in the stillness; a sound low, muffled, throbbing, and mysterious, like the beating of my own blood. Had my mind been clear I could not long have failed to recognise it for what it was. The sound seemed in my ears; but this was merely owing to my position in the shaft. In reality, it was the ticking of the great clock, far above my head.

For hours I sat there listening mechanically, half-unconsciously, to this monotonous sound, broken at intervals by the notes of the deep-toned bell. At length, probably owing in great measure to the heavy effect of the air upon me, I must have passed into a sort of stupor, which lasted very long.

When I came to myself I was conscious of a very singular sensation. The pitchy darkness was upon me, and of course I could see nothing. But, in some unaccountable manner, of which I fear it is impossible for me to convey a notion, I was aware that during my trance the weight had descended a great way, and was now close above my body. I could feel, though nothing touched me, the huge and threatening mass brooding over me in the darkness. With a mighty effort—for, like a person in a nightmare, I seemed to have lost my power of motion—I raised my hand. My expectation was a correct one. My hand struck against the under surface of the weight, at an elevation of less than three inches from my face! At last—after an eternity of unutterable suspense—at last—it touched me.

It touched me. At first lightly; then with a perceptible pressure; then with a pressure which grew distressing. In vain I sought relief; in vain I strove to writhe my body into the narrow compass. Slowly, steadily, the mass descended, crushing me against the floor.

The last minutes of my life seemed come. I breathed a prayer to heaven and resigned myself to die. Still a space the weight descended; my brain swam; my breathing became difficult; I believe that for some brief seconds I bore upon my fainting form the whole burden of the ponderous mass. The blood rushed in torrents to my head, I felt that my senses were leaving me.

Very suddenly the pressure ceased. I was conscious of a welcome relief. I drew in a deep breath, freely. I moved my limbs, and found their liberty no dream. The weight was gone!

I raised my hand and it encountered space. I staggered, gasping, to my feet. The weight was already above my head, and rising rapidly upward in the darkness of the shaft. A sound of moving mechanism reached me from above. I thought I heard the murmur of voices; men were moving in the tower above me.

The purpose which had brought them there was evident; they were winding up the clock.

It was not until afterwards that I learned what really had occurred. The clock should have been wound up the day before; but the men whose duty it was to do the winding had overlooked their work, and the oversight was not discovered till late at night. Afraid that the clock would run down, and that they should be blamed, they had come to the cathedral earlier than usual to rectify the error. Had it not been for their neglect of duty the weight would not have descended nearly so far as it did toward the bottom of the shaft; while, had their visit been delayed but a little longer, they would assuredly have found the clock already stopped—stopped by a cause which now I shudder to think of. Then—at that moment of relief—I thought of nothing clearly. Giddy, bewildered, reeling with a wild sense of deliverance, the prolonged oppression of my soul found vent in a loud, long, and ringing cry.

I remember little more, and that confusedly. I have some dim memory of an interval of silence, broken by voices outside my prison; of the sudden opening of the door; of a blinding light; of a group of several forms without. I seem to remember also that there were cries of wonder as I staggered from my narrow lodging and fell fainting into the arms of my deliverers. But these things are to me as the shadows of a dream. The rushing darkness returned upon me, and for many hours I knew no more.

Such is the story of my strange adventure. I greatly doubt whether in all the chapter of accidents in history a stranger one can be found. I have already stated that its truth is known to several persons, and that the strict accuracy of my account can be verified by simple inquiry.

**"ROUGH ON PILES."**—Why suffer piles? Immediate relief and complete cure guaranteed. Ask for "Rough on Piles." Sure cure for itching, pruritus, bleeding, or any form of Piles.

According to the new issue of the General Annual Return of the army, we find the non-commissioned officers and men of militia classified under five heads—"Churchmen, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, other Protestants, and Roman Catholics." The aggregate strength of the force is 112,783, of whom 59,246 belong to the Established Church, while no fewer than 38,379 are entered as Catholics. Lumping together the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and other Protestants, the fact is arrived at that the militia contains only 14,958 Dissenters against nearly three times that number of Catholics.

A widow named Rebecca Grosvenor, residing at Newtown, Montgomeryshire, has just attained her 102nd year, having been born in 1784. Her health is excellent, and her eyesight is so good that she can read and thread a needle without the use of glasses.

Professor Grisar, Professor of History in the University of Innsbruck, has been summoned to Rome by the Pope to consult the archives of the Vatican with a view to writing a confutation of "*the History of the city of Rome from the fifth to the sixteenth century*," wherein the author Gregorovius sets forth numerous groundless accusations against the Popes.