LIBERIA HERALD.

NEW SERIES.

(FOR OUR COUNTRY.)

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LIBERIA HERALD

Published Semi-Monthly.

The Liberia Herald is published in Monrovia on the First and Third Wednesdays in each month, at One Dollar *per annum*, payable in advance.

The rates of advertising in the Liberia Herald, are,—

For a single square, one insertion, $" 37 1-2c
For half a square, one insertion, $" 25c.
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Five lines or less, constitute half a square, and ten lines a square. If an advertisement exceeds a square the price will be in exact proportion.

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No notice will be taken of anonymous communications; nor will rejected communications be returned.

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Monrovia Feb. 21st 1851.

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LIBERIA HERALD

August 1st 1851

LIBERIA HERALD.

BURIED ALIVE.

From the Diary of C. Hodgson, Esq, deceased, formerly of Bristol, England.

The following story, taken from an European magazine, will be the more interesting to our readers, as it is said to be a true account, and unadulterated with a particle of fiction. It should serve as a fearful warning to those who hasten to bury their dead out of their sight.

I had been subject to epileptic fits from my youth upwards which though they did not deprive me of animation in the sight of those about me completely annihilated my own consciousness. I used to be attacked at all times and seasons, but most commonly about the full of the moon. I generally had a warning of a peculiar nature, when these attacks were coming on, that it would be difficult to describe. It was a sensation, that, to be known must be experienced. My excellent wife Martha, (I mean my first wife, who has been dead now for at least forty years,) used to say that she always observed an unusual paleness over my complexion, otherwise ruddy, for a day or two before the fit came upon me. Bless her soul! she never let me be one moment out of her sight, from the instant she had a suspicion of my approaching malady. This benevolent caution on her part, was a great means of enabling her to subdue the violence of the fit when it came, for which purpose her experience had pointed out to her several useful applications. I married again after her decease, because I was oppressed beyond bearing my loneliness, which none but persons in such a situation—I mean a widower's—can tell. My second wife, whom I have also buried, was not so penetrating in the faculty of observation—She was a woman of admirable thrift, and to her economy it was, under God, I owe my preservation in the terrible event I am about to detail. Had I been buried in lead, it would have been all over with me.

Our family burying place in Bristol, is in——church, where there is a general vault, in which all persons who can fee the officials high nough, may be placed until their friends forget them—which for that matter in trading towns, is not a very long time; but this is only granted provided they can be buried in lead. I suppose they are turned out of their metal coffins in the end, as they are in London and other places, that the old lead may buy a carousal for the church wardens and sexton, and make room for new tenants to be served in the same manner.—But to my story.—To my excellent wife I owe my preservation. Willing to save as much money as possible at my funeral, she had my body, with all the usual and proper grief attendant upon the ceremony, put into a stout fir coffin, the weight of which was increased by a couple of hundred weights, placed one at my head, the other at my feet. Thus the thing passed off well, and money was saved to my heirs. I hereby cast no reflections upon my dear departed wife's regard for me. I was convinced, as I told her, that her motive was good; and well did it turn out for me that she was so thrifty and considerate. She was a true Bristol woman, and as the citizens there generally are, pretty clean and close fingered; but it is error on the right side. She was called Susannah, the daughter of an opulent and ancient councilman, and I got my freedom of the city by marrying her. She was plain in her person, and all Bristol women formerly were—but I wander again from my story.

I had made a most excellent dinner—of this I have a perfect recollection. Of more than this I can recollect nothing until coming out of my fits as I suppose—for I quickly imagined feeling the usual sensations, that I was recovering from one of them. I say that on coming to myself I was surprised to feel pinioned and in utter darkness. I had no space to stir if I would, as I soon found, while struggling to loose a sheet or some such thing in which I was scantily enveloped. My hand would not reach my head when I attempted to do so, by reason of my elbow touching the bottom, and my hand the top of the enclosure around me. It was the attempting to do this, and finding myself naked, except with the aforesaid covering, that struck me I had been entombed alive. The thought rushed suddenly upon me. My first sensations were those of simple surprise. I was like a child aroused out of a deep sleep, and not sufficiently awake to recognize its attendants.

When the truth flashed upon me in all its fearful energy. I can never forget the thrill of horror that ran through me. It was as if a bullet had penetrated my heart and all the blood in my body had gushed through the wound. Never; never can hell be more terrible than the sensations of that moment. I lay motionless for a time petrified with terror. Then a clammy dampness burst forth from every part of my body. My doom seemed inevitable; and so strong at length became this impression, so bereft of hope appeared my situation, that I ultimately recovered from it to plunge in the depth of a calm, resolute despair. As not the faintest ray of hope could penetrate the darkness around my soul, resignation to my fate followed.

I began to think of death coolly; and to calculate how long I might survive before famine closed the hour of my existence. I prayed that I might have fortitude to die without repining. Calmly as I then felt, I tried to remember how long man could exist without food. Thus the tranquility of my despair made me comparatively easy, if contrasted with the situation in which I felt my self afterward, when hope began to glimmer upon me. My days must in the end be numbered—I must die at last—I was only perishing a little sooner than I otherwise must have done. Even from this thought I derived consolation; and now I think life might have closed calmly upon me; if the pangs of hunger had been at all bearable; and I have been told that they are much more so than is commonly believed.

If my memory serves me correctly, this calm state of mind did not last long. Reason soon began to whisper to me that if I had been buried, and the earth closed around my coffin, I could not be able to respire, which I could now do with ease. I did not, of course, dream of the vault in which I was placed, but considered at first I had been buried in earth. The freedom of respiration gave me the idea that after all I was not carried forth for interment, but that I was about to be borne to the grave, and that there I should be suffocated inevitably. Such is the inconsistency of the human mind, that I, who had just now resigned myself to die by famine, imagined this momentary mode of death a thousand times more formidable. —The idea that I was not yet buried increased my anxiety to be heard from without. I called aloud and struck the sides and lid of the coffin to no purpose, till I was hoarse and fatigued, but all in vain. A stillly silence reigned around me amid the unbroken darkness.

I was now steeped in fearful agony. I shrieked with horror, and plunged my nails into my sides and wounded them. The coffin was soaked in my blood; and by tearing the wooden sides of my prison with the same maniacal feeling I lacerated my fingers and wore the nails to the quick, and soon became motionless from exhaustation. When I was myself once more, I called aloud my wife's name. I prayed, and I fear I blasphemed, for I know not what I said; and I thus continued until my strength left me, and nature once more sought replenishment in temporary insensibility.

At this time I had a vision of a most undefinable character, if it was one, and not a glance, as I am induced to think it was, between the portals of death into the world of spirits. It was all shapeless and formless. Images of men and women, often numberless, in a sort of shadowy outline, came before and around me. They seemed as if limbless from decay. Their featureless heads moved upon trunks hideously vital, in figures like bodies that I have seen drawn forth from burning dwellings, each being rather a hideous misshapen mass, than human resemblance. Thick darkness and silence succeeded, the darkness and silence of a too horrible reality. If, as I suspected, I slept about this time, from weakness, it was but to awaken again to a more fearful consciousness of my dreadful situation.

Fresh but vain efforts to make myself heard were now reiterated as far as my strength would allow. I found with great difficulty I could turn on my side, and then over on my belly. I tried by lifting my back and by a violent strain, to burst open the coffin lid, but the screws resisted my utmost strength. I could not, beside, draw up my knees sufficiently high to afford a tenth part of the purchase I should otherwise have made to bear upon it. I had no help but to turn again to the position of the dead, and reluctantly gain a little repose from my agonizing exertions. I was conscious how weak my efforts had made me but I resolved to repeat them.—While thus at rest—if inactive torture can be denominated rest—I wept like a child when I thought of the sunshine and blue skies and fresh air which I should never more enjoy—how living beings throeged the streets and thousands round me were joyous or busy, while I was doomed to perish in torture—Why was my fate differently marked out to that of others? I had no monstrous crimes to repent of Hundreds of criminal men were in the full revelry of life. I fancied I heard the toll of a bell. Breathless I listened. It was a clock striking the hour. The sound was new life to me. I am not inhumed at least, but perhaps am watched. Such were my thoughts. Interment will take place. My coffin will be moved I shall easily make myself be heard then. This was balm to me. I shouted anew, struck my prison board with all the power left me, and ceased only when exertion was no longer possible.

Men may fancy how they would find themselves under similar circumstances, and on the like trying occasions, but it is seldom a correct judgment can be previously formed on such matters. It was only at intervals that I was so fearfully maddened by my dreadful situation as to lose the power of rational reflection, or so overcome as to be debared the faculty of memory. Stretched in a position where my chances consisted only of a turn on my side upon hard boards, the soreness of my limbs was excrutiatingly painful. When I drew my feet up a few inches, my knees pressed the cover, so that the slight shift of position brought no relief My impatience of the restraint in which I was kept began at length to drive me well nigh into madness. I was fevered My temples burned and throbbed, my tongue became dry, light flashed across my eyes, and my brain whirled round. I am sure that my existence was preserved solely by the diminished strength and subsequent feebleness which I experienced, and which, from its rendering me insensible to increasing exacerbation of my brain's heat, allowed nature to resume her wonted temperature. But, alas! this was only that I might revive to encounter once more irremediable horror. Who could depict the frenzy, the unspeakable anguish of my situation? I thought my eyes would start from my head Burning tears flowed from my cheeks. My heart was swollen almost to bursting. I became restless in feeling, without finding space for a fancied relief in a new change of position. In my mental anguish, at times, however, I forgot my motionless bodily suffering, my rack of immovable agony.

How many hours I lay in this state of active and passive torture, I cannot tell. My thirst, however, soon became intolerable.—My mouth seemed full of hot ashes. I heard again the hollow sound of a clock bell, of no small magnitude; judging from its deep intonation. No cranny which I had hitherto observed in my prison, let in light—though I well knew there must be some fissure for fresh air, for the continuance of life so far. How else had I existed? It was night; perhaps, when I first came to myself in my prison of six dark board. I groped in vain over every part of their wooden surface which I could reach. I could find no chink, could see no ray Again I heard the hollow knell which tended to increase my fearful agony. O, what were my feelings!

For a long time after this, I lay steeped in my sufferings—or at least for a long time as it seemed to me. My head was buried all over—my limbs were excessively sore—the skin rubbed off in many places with my struggling—my eyes aching with pain. I sought relief by turning on my right side—I had never before turned but on my left—when I found under me a hard substance which I had never before perceived. I grasped it with some difficulty, and soon found it was a knot from the coffin plank, which had been forced inwards, in all probability, since I was placed there. I saw also a dim light through a hole, about as large as a half-crown piece, just below where my chin came. I put my hand to it, and found it covered with cloth, which I easily imagined was the liming of my coffin. I soon contrived to force my finger through the cloth, though not without considerable difficulty. Faint enough was the light it revealed, but it was a noonday sun of joy to me. By an uneasy strain of my neck, I could see obliquely through the opening, but everything was confused in my brain. My sight was cloudy, heavy and thick. I could at first only distinguish there was light, but could see no object. My senses, however, seem to sharpen as new hopes arose. I closed my eyes for a minute together, and opened them to resore their almost worn out powers of vision. At length I could distinguish that immediately opposite to me there was a small window crossed by massive iron bars, through which the light I saw streamed in upon me like joy in the soul of misery. I now cried with delight. I thought I was among men again, for the pitchy darkness around me was dispersed, I forgot for a

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