

anomalies of the human mind would be no easy task, falling, as they pretty clearly do, within the province of metaphysical inquiry. The following anecdote, for example, is a complete philosophical problem.

A man, determined upon suicide, stood upon the parapet of the Pont Royal at Paris, and was just on the point of leaping into the river, when his eye and ear were arrested by the angry challenge of a sentinel, who, pointing his musket at the man, peremptorily ordered him to come down, threatening at the same time to shoot him. It seemed easy and natural enough to have avoided this new danger by putting into execution the preconceived resolution of jumping into the Seine; for it might well be presumed, that a person who had made up his mind to be drowned, need not have evinced so marked a repugnance to the alternative of being shot; strange however to relate, the word and gesture of the sentry produced such a reaction in the mind of the intended suicide, that instead of casting himself into the water, he hastily scrambled down from the bridge parapet, and took to his heels.

The French have a word, "La chair de poule," by which they express that sort of electric shudder which is apt to run through the frame at the recital of terrific perils and marvellous escapes, and it is a feeling which like the contagious terror produced by ghost stories upon the minds of a fire-side party, is not without its charm.

The following are a few situations of imminent hazard wherewithal imagination may be so self-tortured.

The Land's End in Cornwall consists of a promontory covered with green sward, of which the granite cliffs present to the ever stormy sea that dashes against that coast, a grand and most precipitous rampart. The descent from the high road, distant about a quarter of a mile from the sea, to the very brink of the cliffs, is by an extremely steep smooth lawn.

Some years back, a gentleman on horseback was run away with on this spot. Horse and rider were seen rushing down the green declivity with ungovernable speed, and the immediate destruction of both seemed inevitable; but upon this very edge of the precipice, the horseman had the dexterity to let himself drop on the turf, thus saving his life. The horse leapt into the sea, and the impress left on the sod by his hinder feet, about a yard from the brink of the precipice, has been preserved to this day in commemoration of the event.

A more fatal leap was that which many years ago gave the name of "the white mare" to Whiston Cliff, an abrupt precipice on the side of one of the Hambleton hills in Yorkshire. An extensive tract of table land has been long used as a training ground for race-horses, skirted in one direction by the above cliff. A thorough-bred mare had run away with her trainer. Unable to control her course, his efforts to check the animal's speed probably rendered her the more ungovernable; she leapt the precipice with her rider, and both were dashed to atoms.

It is difficult to conceive a more horribly grand spectacle than that which must have been afforded by that doomed horseman on his maddened steed taking the dreadful leap.

The eminent French landscape painter, Robert, when pursuing his studies at Rome, upon two occasions found himself in positions that deserve to be recorded among the predicaments of peril. Having gone alone to the catacombs of St. Sebastian to examine the fresco paintings which are to be met with amongst those gloomy and intricate caverns; in the ardour of a youthful artist's research, he lost the line by means of which he threaded his way through the labyrinth, and for twenty-four hours endured the horrible apprehension of being buried alive. During all that time, by the light of a torch, (which became extinguished long before he had succeeded in his wearisome search) Robert groped his way through the subterranean passages, vainly seeking to recover his lost clue, and with apparent reason anticipating his utter inability to do so. Overwhelmed with fatigue, hunger, and terror, he had almost given himself over for lost, when, on the morning of the second day, as he languidly crawled among the bones of the dead, his hand all at once grasped the long looked for line, and the emotion of that moment, its revulsion of feeling, and the sudden transition from the depth of despair to hope and life, were never forgotten.

Another time, the same artist had ascended the cupola of St. Peter's, and was watching the proceedings of some work-

men employed upon certain repairs required in and about the dome. To facilitate the bringing up of the water necessary for their operations, they had bethought themselves of throwing a couple of planks, fastened together in the centre, across the inside of the cupola, and by means of ropes attached to them, drawing up buckets from the basement of the church. A bridge was thus formed of about two feet wide, but as it had been only constructed for the convenience of raising water, no attention had been lavished on its capability for the support of a human being. A sudden and irresistible impulse to cross this insecure and narrow bridge seized Robert, and not till he had made three or four steps along it did he become fully sensible of the extreme danger of the enterprise, at the same time that he discovered the impossibility of turning back. To stop short and close his eyes, was, as he himself afterwards declared, the only expedient which saved him at that moment from falling, overpowered by vertigo, and startled by a volley of imprecations uttered by the workmen upon seeing the Frenchman thus periling his life. Straining his presence of mind to the utmost, the artist opened his eyes, and with a firm step trode the tottering plank. As he approached the centre part, he felt it crack beneath his feet.

"The plank is rotten, the unhappy man will . . ." cried one of the workmen, and a violent blow on the mouth from one of his comrades prevented him from completing his sentence.

Aghast and breathless, the Frenchman reached the opposite side of the cupola, and fell on his knees in speechless gratitude to heaven.

He was roused to consciousness by receiving blows and abuse from the workmen for having caused them such a moment of terror. Robert was at first disposed to be very wrathful at such usage, but observing a boy's mouth bathed in blood, inquired why it was in such a state: "Would you have had us let him go on bawling in such a manner as to have deprived you of the few senses you had left!" was the reply. Its bluff good will disarmed the artist's anger, and with a cordial grasp of the hand, he acknowledged his gratitude for the mason's friendly interest, thus rudely, but effectively, exerted in his behalf.

Some years ago, public curiosity at Rome was painfully excited by the feats of two English gentlemen, vying with each other in acts of temerity. One of them placed himself astride upon an arm of the cross which surmounts the cupola of St. Peter's: and the other to surpass his companion's hardihood, mounted to the top of it. Not however to be outdone, the former clambered up a conductor which soars twelve feet above the cross, of dimensions too taper to be distinguishable from the earth, and placed his glove upon its point. At that altitude, and clinging to an invisible rod, the adventurous climber appeared to the astounded multitudes that thronged the great Piazza in front of St. Peter's, as if he were soaring unsupported in mid-air.

Perhaps none of the many callings exercised by mankind present situations of more imminent hazard than the occupation pursued by the hardy islanders of the North Sea, who lower themselves from their precipitous cliffs by means of a rope fastened round their waists, and derive a livelihood from taking the eggs of sea-birds, myriads of which frequent those coasts, and rear their young in fissures and cavities of the rock. The Faroe Islands vary in altitude from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet, generally presenting a perpendicular face to the sea, which continually dashes against their base, and to behold human beings suspended between earth and ocean, with seeming unconcern pursuing their perilous avocation, creates a thrill in the bosom of the beholder.

Of such wild scenes and daring men are the following anecdotes illustrative.

A fowler had gone out to lay gins on the verge of the cliff. His foot catching in one of them, he fell head foremost over the precipice, and literally remained all night suspended by his great toe. To call for assistance at so late an hour would have been fruitless, to make any attempt to struggle upwards, equally so, besides endangering thereby the already frail fastening by which alone he was still held to the earth. The only resource was by desperate efforts to grasp such casual projections as might be presented by the perpendicular side of the precipice, and thus slightly relieve the foot from enduring the burthen of the whole body. In this position, looking downwards at the