

A CANAL-BOAT TRIP.

LOG OF THE MABEL FROM BROOKLYN TO BUFFALO.

When New York "Lights Up," as seen from the Cabin of a Canal-Boat Off the Battery—How the Tow of Sixty Boats was Made Up—Up the Hudson to Troy, and Then Through the Great Locks.

"We intend to do nothing, and do it all day long," firmly said one of the two women who had made up their minds to "boat it" up the Hudson and the Mohawk Valley.

At first we tried to explain to our anxious friends that we did not mind a "tame" vacation; in fact, were just two wandering schoolmarm who proposed to board in the cabin of a canal-boat instead of in the stuffy back attic of some place that called itself a popular summer resort.

We found a captain's wife who was open to conviction on the subject of boarders.

"I don't use the cabin of the other boat, anyway," she said, "and you'd be a sort of company."

We found that the more well-to-do of the canalers usually run two boats. In this case the family was small, and occupied only the cabin of one boat. That of the "consort," the Mabel, was assigned to us.

The Mabel is a lake boat—that is, she has her cabin window above the deck, with a deck plank outside. Her cabin is a neat little room 12 feet by 16, with a berth on one side toward the stern, a folding bed on the other, and clothes-presses between them; a china closet and dresser and a cooking-stove in one-half the "forward" end and space for table and chairs directly at the foot of the hatch, which occupies the other corner.

This comprises really two bedrooms, kitchen and dining-room, that

may all be divided from each other by sliding doors, though, in this case, space would certainly be limited.

and a life saving department. Our friend on the boat appeared and fitted our trunks into two cubby-holes, where they seemed to dwindle to ordinary and convenient size. We told him that we could bear everything but the rocking-chairs, and he said he would put them down amidships.

Then our captain came aboard and told us the Mabel would stay where she was until night. So we might go ashore if we liked.

One of us went on various affairs, and she walked through Sussex street, once the dwelling place of noted men—Gov. Beadle, Gov. Abbott, Chancellor Zabriske and Dudley Gregory, the contemporary of Henry Clay and the patron of Horace Greeley—and she saw the site of the First Presbyterian Church, behind which the battle of Paulus Hook took place, and that of the Thatch Cottage Garden, where the gentry of 1830 used to view the beauties of the bay. She did not know all this at the time, however.

The other woman nobly retrieved her mistake in having such an inopportune headache, and cleared up the cabin so that it became a cozy little home, with everything trim, trim and shipshape, from dishpan to ink bottle. Then she emerged pink and triumphant to greet her returning comrade, and we went to tea with the captain's wife on the other boat.

In the midst of it (the tea) there was a familiar puff and snort under the bow, and the captain's wife said: "There comes our tug!"

In a moment we were back on the Mabel, and had pulled out our chairs and established ourselves on her cabin top. We were being whisked over to the Battery just as the city and harbor were lighting up with white and red and green and orange,

People who think that the canalers is a happy-go-lucky fellow, who may lie at ease on deck while his mules do all the work, are about as far astray as though they concluded that the locomotive engineer had nothing better to do than go to sleep in his cab.

Even to get a boat into a lock means a keen eye and a steady hand in steering her, quick work with the heavy "bow" and "stern lines" that hold her to the posts—and had management or a weak line has sent many a boat crashing through the lock gates.



A MORNING CALL.

It took us until 8 o'clock in the evening to get through the last lock at Cohoes. We stayed on deck in a state of the wildest excitement. We likewise burned all the skin off our faces and presented the appearance of boiled lobsters. Such things are incidental to a life of adventure.

The steerman's watch or "trick" is six hours, from 1 to 7 and 7 to 1 a. m. and p. m. So at 7 o'clock next morning we turned out to see the horses changed—three were used at a time. To do this the boat is tied up, a horse bridge put out to shore and a plank laid from it into the depths of the bow stable—the little cabin at the forward end of a canal-boat.

Up this plank comes the horse or mule, sometimes wearing a rakish air of knowing it all—that is, when he is used to boating—sometimes frightened out of his wits to know where he shall put his feet, but in either case ignominiously held by the tail by the man who is guiding his progress. Our horses were possessed by a distinct individuality—Jim was a Tartar, Frank was a dude, and Fred, the mule, contrary to vulgar prejudice, was an Adonis, a beautifully marked and powerful animal, quite conscious of his own superiority.

I should have mentioned before that we had these horses on board with us all the time, but they were below decks in their stable until we reached the locks at Troy and the tug left us.

We thought the "beautiful Mohawk Valley" deserving of the term. From rocky banks tufted with fern, to blue mountains and golden harvest fields, it has always something lovely to offer, with the great river winding through its heart.

Nor is the canal to be despised from the aesthetic standpoint. Its banks are often as gay with flowers, and its winding and horseshoe bends as picturesque as those of any stream. Though nature did not originate, she has most gracefully adopted it, and has given it sweet briar and willow and blue-flag and fern. Then here and there it broadens into "wide water."

"Dear me, is this a lake?" we asked the first time we floated out upon one of those silver sheets.

We were told that it was a kind of reservoir that helped to equalize the ebb and flow from the docks, and we duly respected it thereafter.

We had found out several things by this time. One was that we were having the most ideal vacation two tired women ever had. We followed the always good, but nearly always impossible, advice: "Eat when you're hungry, drink when you're thirsty, and sleep when you're tired."

We took one meal each day with the captain's family. This was usually breakfast, but it was not the first thing on our day's programme. One of us became an early riser, and in the dim light of four o'clock in the morning she rose and made coffee for herself and her sleepy comrade. Then she had two delightful hours on deck, where everything was shimmering with the night's dew, before breakfast on the other boat.

After breakfast we superintended our boat's toilet—that is, we looked on while her decks were scrubbed with a broom and innumerable pails of water. Anything cleaner than a well-kept canal-boat like ours it has not been our good fortune to encounter. Until ten o'clock we usually stayed on deck. Then its white glare in the sun became dazzling, and we retreated into the cool and cozy cabin. There we concocted elaborate dinners or delectable cold lunches, as best suited our mood. In the afternoon we slept, and in the cool of the day we had tea on deck.

Then came the long, delightful evening, when we sat hour after hour in the moonlight, enjoying the chill, fresh air that never failed to come with nightfall, and luxuriously pitying our friends on shore.

The locks no longer suggested such lofty reflections on the elements, but they became wonderfully interesting as probable sources of supply—that is, we did our shopping at them. There are groceries on many of them—from the nondescript country store to the imposing establishment of the larger cities—and a white-aproned clerk comes out and takes orders from the passing boats.

Our standing wants were ice, milk

and bread. We cherish grateful recollections of the obliging young grocer who scrambled down the slippery lock wall to land a nearly forgotten piece of ice on our deck. And we liked the enterprising small boy who sold us a plump, warm loaf of homemade bread with the assurance, "Ma just took it out of the oven."

We went through Rochester one day at sunset, and two mornings after climbed the grant stairs of Lockport, where the upper gates of one lock form the lower ones of its successor. This is one of the things that we do not attempt to describe. A veteran boatman said to me, "I never 'locked down' at Lockport without a little fear. Suppose the gates of the upper lock gave way? Why, we'd be kindling wood at the bottom."

At 8 o'clock next morning our mentor aboard the Mabel, who hated to have us miss any of the sights, rapped on my window-blind with the injunction to "look out and see the Niagara River." I looked, but to my sleepy eyes it seemed as though we had put out to sea—nothing but a strip of the towpath. Concluding that this must be a dream, I slept again, and at sunrise woke to find myself in Buffalo.

What we think of our trip has been perhaps sufficiently set forth. To one who loves nature's beauties no mode of travel could be more advantageous. The pace is that of walking without its fatigue, and the facilities for observation quite unique, from the fact that there are no obstructions to the view.

We found the boatman and their families, as a class, eminently self-respecting, quiet, friendly, hospitable, but not familiar.

We called on a neighbor whose boat lay next to ours, at Buffalo, after admiring a beautiful cat which she brought up from below in her arms for an airing. She asked us to come aboard and see her cabin, as theirs was a bulkhead boat, having windows below the deck, and, consequently, had a cabin the full width of the boat.

Unless, however, a radical change in the mode of transportation brings canalizing back to something approaching its former rank as a profitable occupation, the boatmen of the future will not be as the boatmen of to-day. Men of energy and ability will leave it for something more remunerative. Our captain told me that he often receives only three cents a bushel on wheat when his father received 30 cents. "If I can do no better than that I will sell my boats," he said. Steam or electricity may fill the economic gap. Already there are many steam canalboats, and the trolley hovers in the near future.

But when it comes, the boats will be only grain cars afloat, and the characteristic life of the canal will have passed away forever.

The boatman's life is one of considerable hardship, of exposure to heat and cold, of responsibility and of toil. But it is a life that goes to the making of a man. The intelligent boatman grows patient, hardy, fertile in resources and quick in expedient. He gathers information and food for thought from the life and industries of the cities he visits, and he is not insensible to the beauty of the starry heavens and the grain-clad fields.

Of course, not every boatman answers to this description. Among them, as among all men, there are differences of kind and in degree. Yet we are sure that we have seen our typical, or if you prefer to call him so, our ideal, boatman, and we are sure of it, because we had the good fortune to be for five weeks two women on a canal-boat.

Growing Sponges.

"Sponges will probably be cheaper in the near future," said R. C. Kingley. "Recently it has been discovered that these animals will grow and flourish when cut up into slips and transplanted. This brings up the old question as to whether sponges are vegetable or animal, and may result in overturning the old-time verdict that they are a lower order of animal life and not vegetable. However this may be, the sponge beds can be increased indefinitely by simply planting small pieces of them, which grow rapidly."—[Washington Post.

The Japanese Navy.

American interest naturally attaches to the Japanese navy from the fact that her first armed ship of modern design was an American vessel, and her first admiral was an American officer. The vessel was the Stonewall, which was captured from the Confederates while at Havana, and in 1868 was sold to Japan and taken to Yokohama by way of the straits of Magellan in charge of Captain George Brown, United States Navy. The first Japanese admiral was Walter Grinnell, who was appointed to that office while an ensign in the United States navy stationed at Hiogo.—[Detroit Free Press.

He Owns a Volcano.

Is the owner of a volcano to be envied? If so, such a one is General Gaspar Sanchez Ochoa, the proprietor of Popocatepete, the famous "smoking mountain" of Mexico. There has been recently put forward a scheme for the construction of a line of cables to the summit of the mountain, strung with buckets operating by gravity, such as are seen in many of the mining districts in the States. By this means the immense deposits of sulphur may be brought on the market.—[New Orleans Picayune.

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

SEASONABLE HINTS AND MATTERS OF MOMENT.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures Which Show that Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.

BEING a peer of England is not, it seems, an unhealthy heritage. Fifteen of the lords have died within a year, it is true; but ten of them are over the allotted "three score years and ten," and four of them were over eighty. Evidently high life and long life favor each other.

KENTUCKY raises a lot of big things, but the biggest we have heard of lately are the two daughters of a farmer living in the Big Sandy Valley. The oldest girl, who is 13, weighs 470 pounds, and measures six feet around the waist. The youngest daughter is 7, weighs 175 pounds, and measures four and a half feet around the waist.

JOHN WALTON, a farmer living north of Guthrie, Okla., came to town with a load of wheat and got drunk on the proceeds. He started home with a bottle of carbolic acid in his hip pocket, fell out of the wagon and broke the bottle, and when found the acid had eaten into his body so badly that he was fatally injured.

THE Society of Psychical Research, of London, has issued a "Census of Spooks." Out of 17,000 persons that were asked if they had ever seen a ghost, 1,684 answered that they had. Mr. Balfour, of the House of Commons, is a great ghost hunter, and he makes an earnest appeal to scientific men to drop their "bigoted intolerance" and face the mass of strange phenomena that the society have reported.

A TRAMP sneaked into the Barton winery in Fresno, Cal., the other day, secured a demijohn and undertook to take the bung out of a 3,400-gallon cask of wine while the men were at lunch. The force of the wine as it issued out knocked him down and soaked him from head to foot. Fully 1,000 gallons of wine were wasted before the bung was replaced by the men. The wine was valued at \$2,000.

GEORGE LARRIMORE, a colored man, in his eighty-seventh year, and manager of a restaurant adjoining the city market at Tallahassee, Fla., had rather a novel experience on a recent Saturday. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon he took off his shoes to rest his feet. In taking off his right shoe he discovered something in it. Upon examination it proved to be a snake, mashed as flat as a pancake, and it was a genuine rattler, about thirteen inches long, but too dead to wriggle.

THE flash of lightning which recently struck the new palace of Potsdam, Germany, may be congratulated on a measure of tact and consideration seldom seen in connection with the electric fluid. Having greatly endangered the safety of the royal building, the current instantly hurried along the telegraph wires to the fire alarm and set the bells ringing. Thereupon the palace firemen and the town brigade of Potsdam were quickly upon the spot, and the fire was nipped in the bud.

A "BACHELOR OF MUSIC," writing to the *Lancet*, from experiments upon the voice in which he reversed the usual order and developed the "falsetto" notes downward, has reached the conclusion that all male singers and speakers have been producing their voices wrongly, that the proper mechanism for the voice in singing is that used in uttering "falsetto" notes, and that the "falsetto" is all that remains of the rightly produced voice after years of wrong production.

THE other night a brakeman on a freight car on the Pennsylvania Railroad had an unpleasant experience on his train at a point near Frazer. At that place a tramp came hurrying to him across the top of the cars, and, telling him that he was subject to epileptic fits and that he was about to have one, sank down and began writhing violently. Brakeman Horner took hold of him and was tightly clutched by the man and for several miles it was with the greatest effort that Horner prevented the sufferer from falling from the car and pulling him along. When the man recovered he said he was on his way to the far west.

THE Two Republics (Mexico) notes the erection on the summit of Mount Orizaba, or as the Mexicans call it, Citlaltepeli (Star Mountain), of an iron cross seven yards high in place of the wooden one, erected there a long while ago. The Two Republics asserts that this cross is the highest one in America. It has been supposed, it says, that the volcano Mistes, in Guatemala, was higher than Orizaba, but recent measurements make it appear that the latter mountain is the highest one north on the Isthmus of Panama, and it is the highest on the western continent on which a cross has been erected. Probably it is the highest one in the world.

A MEETING of cattlemen was held recently in Jackson Co., S. D., to discuss the matter of ridding ranges of the numberless wolves which now infest them, much to the annoyance and damage of the cattlemen. It has finally been decided to assess each owner of cattle or horses one cent per head, the money thus raised to be converted into a fund and paid out in bounties of \$5 for each gray wolf's scalp brought in. This plan is believed to be the only solution of the question, and it is believed it will result in the number of wolves being greatly diminished. Great damage has been done by wolves on the

ranges of South Dakota this season, and these pests are practically the only serious obstacle against which the stockmen have to contend.

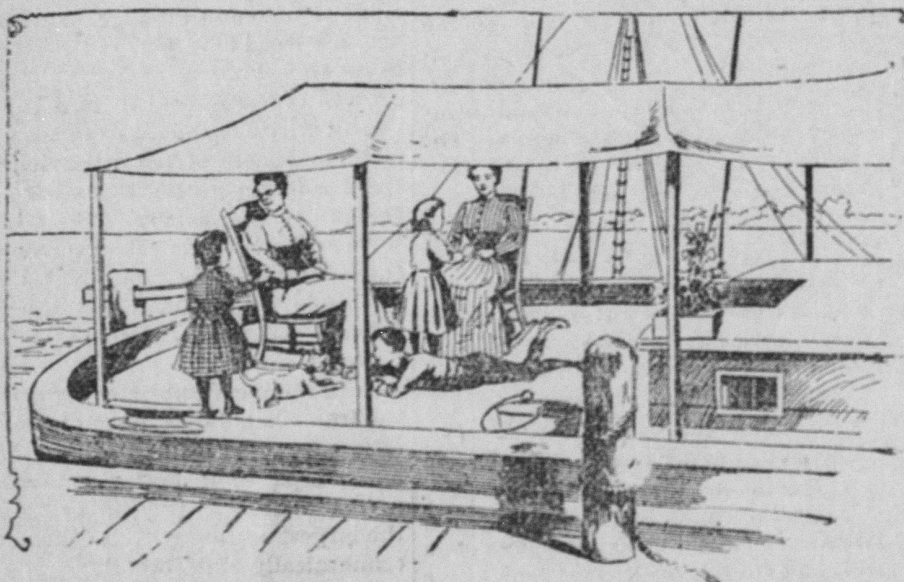
AFTER careful and prolonged consideration, the British Government has at length decided to adopt the Bertillon system of the identification of criminals, in conjunction with the finger-print system originated by Sir William Herschell and by Mr. Francis Galton. The system of M. Bertillon consists in recording the measurements of diverse bony parts of the human frame—parts which do not alter with any change which age, accident or device may make in the muscular tissue. With these data it is possible to establish the identity of any criminal whose measurements are already on record. M. Bertillon and his assistants having found that out of nearly 500,000 persons who had passed through their hands, no two individuals were exactly the same in all particulars recorded.

SWALLOWS invariably arrive in Austria on March 25 and leave September 8 for a milder climate. During a recent sojourn of the Empress at her daughter's (the Arch-duchess Marie Valerie), castle of Lichtenegg, near Weis, in upper Austria, Her Majesty took a great interest in some swallows which actually built their nest on the large chandelier of the grand parlor in the castle. This nest was so peculiarly built around the main branch of the chandelier that even the chain for raising or lowering the chandelier could be used without in any way affecting the comfort of the swallows. On her Majesty's seeing the manner in which these swallows had built their nest she was greatly delighted, as it is supposed to bring good luck. She gave strict orders that the birds should not be disturbed, notwithstanding the fact that their presence was ruining a valuable carpet and doing much damage generally.

THE Gazette de Lausanne announces that in the Church at Aubonne the tomb which, according to the Latin inscription on the memorial stone, contains the heart of the famous French naval commander Abraham du Quesne, was formally opened in the presence of the authorities, and a small silver box was found in a cavity hollowed out of the rock. The box was opened and found to contain a human heart incased in lead. A record of the discovery was drawn up by a notary, and the box was then replaced pending its removal to Dieppe, the municipality of which town has expressed a desire to have the relic, Du Quesne having been born at the Norman seaport in 1610. The Commander, who died in 1688, was the hero of the defense of Bordeaux against the English and Spaniards in 1650. He also won a brilliant victory over the famous Dutch Admiral de Ruyter, in 1676. Although known to history as Admiral du Quesne, he never enjoyed the title officially, his profession of the Protestant faith having prevented his attaining flag rank.

Nor long ago a brief telegram from New Zealand announced that Tawhaio II., the great Maori King, had died of influenza. He was a genius in his way and was a fitting ruler for the fierce race of aborigines who gave England more trouble than the natives of any other savage country she has conquered. When finally subjugated Tawhaio became learned in the ways of the world and expressed a desire to see the world. This wish was encouraged by the British authorities, who put a vessel at his disposal, and with half a dozen subordinate chiefs he sailed for England. The King and his followers made the journey in safety, and of course saw the Queen. King Tawhaio was struck with the appearance of the great Queen and made a proposition of marriage to her. Her exact answer is not known, but of course Victoria refused the hand and heart of the chief despite the tattooed adornment on his face and body and the alluring bait he held out in the shape of a long and all-conquering kingly lineage. King Tawhaio was not hurt at the refusal of the Queen, but he thought she was foolish not to accept, and on his return to his native land often spoke of the matter, and in these references considered Victoria the loser by her declination.

A GOOD story is told of a certain St. Louis speculator who had need of a large sum of money for his operations, and found himself with a very small balance in the bank. He consulted the cashier, a friend of his, as to how he could get over the emergency, and the cashier suggested that he should draw on somebody not too near the city. The operator said that he knew of no one that owed him, and the cashier insinuated that that would make no difference, if the draft did not return too soon. The operator reflected a time, and then wrote out a draft on the sultan of Turkey for \$10,000, and deposited it in the bank. The draft went to New York, and thence to London, where it came into the hands of the Rothschilds, who forwarded it to Constantinople, and it was duly presented to the sultan's chamberlain, who, not knowing anything about it, referred it to the sultan. "Who is this man?" asked the sultan. "Don't know him," replied the chamberlain. "Do we owe him anything?" demanded his highness. "No," replied the other. "Then do not pay it," decided the potentate. "But, if I might advise," said the crafty counselor, "this draft comes through the Rothschilds, with whom we are negotiating a two million loan. Would it be safe, under the circumstances, to dishonor it?" "Pay it," said the sultan, and so the St. Louis speculator was \$10,000 richer than he knew, to his own great astonishment.



AN AFTERNOON SCENE ON A CANAL BOAT.

There are seven windows and a skylight, to say nothing of the hatch. This item is for the benefit of people who think the cabin of a canal-boat is a "stuffy" place.

Every bit of space is utilized for drawers, shelves or cubby-holes of some sort.

The first thing that happened to us was to be towed over to Dow's Dock, near South Ferry, Brooklyn. We saw the Mabel's grain being whisked up the chute of a big elevator, and the men who shoveled it climbed up from amidships, looking like dusty gnomes when their work was done.

Our companion boat was somewhere on the other side of the dock with the captain's family aboard of her, and the Mabel was under the charge of her steersman.



MARKETING AT A LOCK.

We sat on deck in the evening and looked out between the great storehouses to the orange sunset on the blue water. Mr. Kay came and told us thrilling tales of how the boats sometimes split their sturdy sides and went to the bottom in a moment; how they went out through breaks in the canal wall and tumbled over aqueducts, until we wished our satirical friends who had talked about the canal being tame were there to hear.

Then we went below and climbed over our baggage and into our berths and slept the sleep of the weary.

Next morning a tug came and took us to the Morris Canal Basin, Jersey City.

We were glad to go there because it meant getting our load, and we were glad to hear later of the historic associations of the region, but—was it hot?

After a bit things improved. A friend on shore sent us a huge basket of fruit that was a thing of beauty

and the bridge and Liberty light flashed out aloft.

We thought the making up of a tow must be attended with much noise and confusion and shouting at the boats, as if they were unwieldy animals. Not at all. The Mabel slipped into her place as if she knew it, the Isaac, our captain's other boat, pulled quietly alongside and was lashed to her with stout lines, and before we realized what had happened, we were moving up the North River in a "tier" or row of five boats.

There were eleven or twelve of these tiers making a tow of nearly sixty boats—a moving village, such as we had often seen from a river steamer.

Next day was Sunday. A misty day, too, in the Highlands, but we cared less even for the mountains than for the life of our village. It was, on the whole, a very orderly, self-respecting little community. Many of the boats had awnings, and under them sat little family groups, women in their rocking chairs—ours were down amidships—children often with puppies or kittens in their arms and boys and girls laughing and chatting.

A feature of the river life is the humboat. Above Newburg they came dancing out from the shore, little steam launches, with gayly striped awnings, manned by a kind of nautical street vendor, who reels of something like this, "Here you are—groceries, fruit, fresh eggs, milk, clams, bread, cake, ginger ale, soda water, ice cream, candy and tobacco." We admired all and bought some onions.

Monday morning brought us under the bridges of Albany where several worthy citizens nearly precipitated themselves into the river in their astonishment at the sight of two women in conventional tourist rig, with field-glasses and note-books in their hands, on top of a canal-boat.

At 2 p. m. we went into the first lock. Theoretically, we knew about locks. We had known ever since we studied the "laws of water in motion" in the far-off days of our grammar school physics, but going through a real lock is different. If you are "locking up" your boat slides in between the great stone walls that stand high above her. The lower gates close her in and the lock tender at the upper gates raises a lever. Then the water flows in under them. You hear it gurgling and the big boat rises above the lock walls, and when the heavy gates open to her, glides out on the upper level apparently as light as a child's paper craft. It makes one respect the mighty element, water.

At Troy there are two river locks, and then sixteen successive ones at the beginning of the Erie Canal. These are known among the boatmen as "the 16 locks," although the government has numbered the locks from those in the river consecutively.

It was just here at the locks that we began to appreciate the skill and judgment requisite to a boatman.