

Oh that sight! I can never forget it! The fire was spurring from every crevice of the black hull, her great mainmast was gone, the mizen mast lay with several great white sails swaying about in the water, and she was dragging it along with her. The foremast only stood, and its rigging and sails had not yet caught. A dead silence had succeeded now to the commotion in the vessel: men were standing stock-still, perhaps waiting for their orders, and my uncle's were the only eyes that were not strained to follow the leaping and dazzling fires.

Every moment we approached. Now the first waf of smoke came on our faces, now we could hear a crackling and rattling, the creak and shiver, and the peculiar roaring noise made by a mastering fire.

"A full-rigged ship," I heard Brand whisper to his wife. "Eleven hundred tons at the least."

"Merciful heaven!" she whispered in reply. "I hope she won't blow up. Anyhow, I thank the Lord we've got Master in command himself."

I never saw anything like the horrible beauty of that red light. It added tenfold to the terror of the scene to see her coming on so majestically, dragging with her broken spars and great yards and sprawling sails. She looked like some splendid live creature in distress, and rocked now a good deal in the water, for every moment the wind seemed to rise, bringing up a long swell with it.

The moon went down, and in a few minutes the majestic ship supplied all the light to the dark sky and black water. I saw the two little dark boats nearing her, knew that my brother was in the foremost, and shook with fear, and cried to God to take care of him; but while I gazed in awful silence on the towering ship, the flames bursting through the deck in a new place, climbed up the fore-rigging, and in one single leap, as if they had been living things, they were licking the sails of the ropes, and shooting higher than her topsails, they spread themselves out like quivering fans. I saw every sail that was left an instant bathed in flames; a second burst came raging up from below, blackening and shriveling everything before it; then I saw the waltering fire run down again, and still the wreck, plunging her bows in the water, came rocking on and on.

"How near does our old man mean to go?" whispered Mrs. Brand; and almost at that instant I observed that he had given some order to the man at the helm, and I could distinctly hear a murmur of satisfaction; then almost directly a cry of horror rose—we were very near her, and while the water hissed with strange hissing, and steam in her wake, her blazing foremast fell over the side, plunging with a tremendous crash into the sea, sending up dangerous showers of sparks and burning bits of sailcloth, and covering our decks with falling timber.

The black water took in and quenched all that blazing timber, and still the awful hissing was audible, till suddenly, as we seemed to be sheering off from her, there was a thunderous roll that sounded like the breaking of her mighty heart, and still glorious in beauty she plunged head foremost, and went down blazing into the desolate sea.

In an instant that raging glow and all the fierce illumination of the fire was gone; darkness had settled on the face of the deep. I saw a few lighted spars floating about, that was all; and I smelt my face and felt the hot smoke rushing past my ears as the only evidence that it was not a dream.—From *"Off the Skillys,"* by Jean Ingelow.

HUMORS OF THE DAY.

A CLERICAL JOKER.—The late Edward John Smith, of Kentucky, who died recently at an advanced age, was one of the most eccentric wise south of the Ohio River. He was familiarly known throughout Kentucky as "Raccoon Smith."

While still in the Baptist ministry, and attending one of the annual meetings of that body, a tall, lank, green specimen of humanity presented himself before the Association as a candidate for the ministry. He was not regarded as being of entirely sound mind, and labored under the hallucination that he was especially "called to preach," and kept constantly importuning the Association to grant him the necessary license. In addition to this peculiarly unbalanced mind, young Meeks was the possessor of as huge and ungainly a pair of feet as ever trod shoe-leather. Tired of his importunities, and not being disposed to grant the license, the Association handed him over to Smith, with instructions to make an end of the case, and between them took place the following conversation:

Smith—How do you know you are called?
Meeks—Know it! I feel it in my heart of hearts. I want my license.
Smith—Do you believe the Bible, Brother Meeks?
Meeks—Certainly I do—every word of it.

Smith—If I can prove by the Bible that you are not called to preach, will you be satisfied to drop the matter, and not further importune the Association for a license?
Brother Meeks assented to this, and Raccoon Smith deliberately opened the New Testament at Roman x, 15, and in a grave tone read: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, &c. Then, glancing at Meek's large feet, he remarked: "You see, Brother Meeks, that the feet of the preacher are beautiful. You, sir, have the most monstrously ugly feet of any man in the State of Kentucky; therefore, by this Bible, it is clear that you have not been especially called."

As Smith finished his remarks, the entire Association went off into a paroxysm of laughter; and Meek's really concluding that he had not been "called," bolted from the meeting house, and never after annoyed the Association for a license.

A GOOD JOKE ON A BANK PRESIDENT.—There is a banker in Philadelphia by the side of whose handwriting even the penmanship of Horace Greeley seems symmetrical and beautiful. Well, this banker was persecuted by a life insurance agent who wanted him to take out a policy. The victim stood it for a while, but finally one day he took another line, and he came round to your office and blow out what little brains you have." When the life insurance man received this, he turned it up and down, and held it sideways, and stood before a mirror with it, and examined it with a microscope, and called in six or seven experts, who, after all he could say, were unanimous with my degree of certainty, what he meant. To ascertain, he presented it at the paying teller's desk in the bank, and that worthy, without a moment's hesitation, paid \$5,000 on it, believing it to be a check for that amount. There is no agent less in that city than there was a week or two ago, and the banker who betrays the symptoms of insanity when the subject of life insurance is mentioned in his presence.

HE REMEMBERED THEM.—The Waterbury *American* tells the following story: "A gentleman visiting here from the West went to visit an old schoolmate who lived here. After a conversation about old times, the subject of the boarding-house where they used to live was brought up. Mr. B. asked Mr. A. the name of the house, and Mr. A. replied: 'There, you've gone far enough. Mr. B.; one of those girls is my wife.' With that A. shot off like a rocket, and B. after recovering himself, went in and took something, and immediately started for the city."

A Royal Siamese Game.
The gossip of *Lippincott's Magazine* contains this: "The business of eating concluded, the king called upon his foreign friends to participate in a royal game which had been in vogue as far back as their historical records extended, and which no guest might refuse to share in without giving personal offense to the sovereign. After this production, a signal given by the royal host, five huge baskets filled with very small lines were placed directly in front of the throne. Inviting the foreigners to scramble for the fruit, and telling them that whoever succeeded in getting the largest number should enjoy his highest favor, the king threw as many as he could hold between his two hands, in such manner as to scatter them in every direction over the widest possible space. This was repeated scores upon scores of times, and the guests, wishing to honor the whim of their host entered heartily into the sport, scrambling about upon hands and knees in pursuit of the lines, sometimes receiving from the merry old gentleman a hearty pat over the head or knuckles, at which he would beg pardon and assure his friends that it was quite accidental! After an hour thus spent, the foreigners begged leave to desist, and the native nobles took their turn at the sport.

On examination, each line was found to contain a gold or silver coin; and as the amount thus obtained by each individual was quite considerable, the ladies and gentlemen of our party sent up the money to the king, stating that it would be a violation of the etiquette of our country to receive presents of money. But his Majesty begged very earnestly that the coins should be retained, though merely he said, as a token of royal favor, and in compliance with courtly usage—not at all for their intrinsic value.

AGRICULTURAL.

A NEW USE FOR FLAX SEED.—The following statement, copied from an English paper, is of great interest to the American farmer, as it seems to open a new use for flax seed, and may greatly enhance the price, so as to make flax growing profitable. The new use is in the manufacture of an article called linoleum, deriving the name from linum and oleum. It is said that it will be a rival of caoutchouc, or as is commonly called, India rubber. The new article is manufactured of linseed oil by oxidizing it until it is solidified into a resinous substance, as we frequently find it when it has been exposed to the atmosphere. It is stated that "in this state it is combined with resinous gums and other ingredients, whereupon it assumes the appearance and most of the properties of India rubber. Like India rubber, it can be dissolved into a cement and used in the manufacture of the material for water proof clothing. It can be used as varnish for the protection of iron or wood, or for coating ships' bottoms. It is as good as a common cement, having properties similar to the material made from India rubber and shellac. It is easily vulcanized by exposure to heat, and by this means becomes as hard as the hardest wood, and capable of the finest polish. The great variety of uses to which it can be applied in this form will at once suggest themselves to the reader. The manufacture of linoleum has thus far been made to produce a large amount of profit, and it has proved itself well adapted. Combined with ground cork, it is spread on a stout canvas, the back of which is afterward water proofed with oxidized oil. The fabric is then printed by means of blocks in the ordinary way. The floor cloth thus produced is pliable, noiseless to walk upon, washable, and does not color, and rolls up like an ordinary carpet. It is very durable, and its component parts will not decompose by heat or exposure to the sun or air, as will India rubber.—N. Y. Tribune.

TO GROW WATERMELONS.—Choose a sandy piece of ground, and after having plowed it, mark it out 9 by 9 feet; in a hole 6 inches deep, drop in four seeds as a common corn basket and seven or eight inches deep; into these holes throw a good sized forkful of coarse manure and directly on this a large shovel full of fine manure; then make the hills by drawing the soil from the four corners directly to the center, being careful that the hill, when finished, shall be four inches higher than the general surface; have the hills slant to the southeast. This protects them somewhat from north-westerly winds.

It takes watermelon seed a long time to germinate, especially when planted in early spring; and many times, if the weather proves cold, it will not come up, very few of the seeds will germinate at all. Therefore it is a good plan to plant the seed on one side of the hill, and in about ten days go over and plant again. If the first seed planted fails to come, the last will be almost sure to grow; yet we have known cases where they had to be re-planted three or four times. Cultivate thoroughly and plow once or twice during the growing season, being careful not to let the cultivator or plow run deep enough, when passing the hills, to interfere with the roots. If the roots are disturbed, it will seriously affect the crop.

In planting, eight or ten seeds are usually put in each hill at each planting, and after the plants get well started, all but one or two of the strongest should be removed. The most successful melon growers that we are acquainted with allow but one plant to remain in each hill.

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