

THE DREADED LEVIATHAN.

Story of a Whale Cow That Was a Veritable Demon of Destruction.

A FEARFUL REVENGE.

Her Calf Was Killed by Accident and It Goaded Her to Madness.

Only Two Out of a Flotilla of Fifty-two Boats Escaped Her Attack—The Marvellous Speed She Made From Point to Point—She Finally Escaped Without a Scratch.

A widely-known and feared devilfish has its headquarters in the Northern Pacific, mostly along the American coast, especially affecting the Gulf of California. This huge creature is a mammal, one of the great whale family, really a sort of medium size and moderate yield of oil. It is a peculiar characteristic of this animal that it seems ever on the alert, scarcely exposing for one moment its broad back above the sea surface when rising to spout, and generally traveling, unlike all its congeners, not upon, but a few feet below, the water. A standing order, among the whalers is never by any chance to injure a calf while the mother lives, since such an act exposes all and sundry near the spot to imminent and violent death. Neglect of this most necessary precaution, or more probably accident, once brought about a calamity that befell a fleet of thirteen American whaling ships.

One bright morning, the whole flotilla of fifty-two boats, four from each ship, had been lowered and were making their way as rapidly as possible keeping a bright lookout for "fish." Spreading out fanwise, they were getting more and more scattered, when about near the center of the fleet some one suddenly "struck" and got fast to a fish. But hardly had the intimation been given when something very like panic seized upon the crowd. In a moment or two the reason was apparent. From some cause, never definitely known, a harpooner had in striking a large cow whale transfixed her calf at her side with his harpoon, killing it immediately. The mother, having quietly satisfied herself that her offspring was really dead, turned upon her aggressors like a veritable demon of destruction, and, while carefully avoiding exposure of her body to attack, simply spread devastation among the flotilla. Whenever she rose to the surface, it was but for a second, to emit an expiration like the hiss of a lifting safety valve, and almost always to destroy a boat or complete the destruction of one already hopelessly damaged.

Every blow was dealt with accuracy and an appearance of premeditation that filled the superstitious Portuguese, who formed a good half of the crews, with dismay—the more so, that many of them could not guess at the original cause of what was really going on. The speed of the monster was so great that her almost simultaneous appearance at points widely separated made her seem ubiquitous; and as she gave no chance whatever for a blow, it certainly looked as if all the boats would be destroyed serially. Not content with dealing one tremendous blow at a boat and reducing it at once to a bundle of loose boards, she renewed her attentions again and again to the wreckage, as if determined that the destruction should be complete. Utter demoralization had seized even the veterans, and escape was the only thought governing all action. But the distance to the shore was great, and the persistence and vigor of the furious leviathan, so far from diminishing, seemed to increase as the terrible work went on. At last two boats did succeed in reaching the beach at a point where it sloped very gradually. The crews had hardly leaped overboard, to run to their craft up high and dry, when close behind them in the shallows foamed and rolled their relentless enemy, just too late to reach them. Out of a large number of well-equipped boats that left the ships that morning, only these two escaped unharmed. Most of the men were badly injured, and six, one of whom was the unhappy origin of the whole trouble, were killed outright. The triumphant avenger of her slain offspring disappeared as silently as she had carried on her deadly warfare.

Unfriendly Plants.

Fancy two plants being so unfriendly that the mere neighborhood of one is death to the other. Yet this is the case with two well-known English plants. These are the thistle and the rape. If a field is infested with thistles which come up year after year and ruin crops, all you have to do is to sow the rape. The thistle will be absolutely annihilated.

A Russian Discovery.

General Vennkoff, a Russian, has discovered a magnetic pole of the earth, or something like it, at Kotchetowka, in the government of Koursk. The magnetic needle freely suspended becomes vertical there; but at sixty feet from the center it inclines one degree from the vertical.

Would be Popular Here.

In the island of New Britain a man must not speak to his mother-in-law. Not only is speech forbidden to his relative, but she must be avoided, and if by chance the lady is met the son-in-law must hide himself or cover his face.

WENT LOOKING FOR LADUKE

An Incident in Potsdam When the Log Drivers Had Been Paid Off.

When the freshets swell the Adirondack rivers they carry northward millions of feet of lumber in the shape of thirteen-foot logs, freshly cut and clothed in bark at the outset, splintered and stripped for the most part when they reach the sorting boom of some mill town in the St. Lawrence Valley. Often for miles one can scarcely see the surface of the river, nothing but a stretch of restless, edging nudging logs. That is the "big drive," and the men who wait on the caprices of these logs from the mountain slope to mill pond are the "river drivers."

Some fifty of these river drivers were paid off in Potsdam village on a Saturday night. Within two hours the whole gang were drunk and happy, with that comprehensive happiness that comes to an Irishman in the first stages of intoxication.

Then it was that Jerome Petrie, a ratlike little Canadian shoemaker, contrived to trip big Mike Donovan as he swung, a trifle unsteadily, around a corner. Mike hung on to the next man and the whole line went down. A howl of rage burst from the crowd behind. In a flash the merry stage of intoxication had given way to the furious and Jerome was running for his life. He made for his own home, and the torrent of raging, red-shirted lumbermen poured into the narrow, dingy streets of the Canadian quarter. Then one yelled:

"Let's clean out the whole Canuck nest."

With a yell the gang surged forward against the nearest shanty. There was a shattering of windowpanes, and the crazy door, hastily barricaded with household furniture, was giving at the hinges, when Antoine Laduke came around the corner. He was a Canadian blacksmith, only five feet four in his stockings, but with muscles that stood out like twisted cables on arm and thigh and shoulder. As he caught the meaning of the tumult he stooped, lifted from the neglected sidewalk a light, flat slab of red sandstone and broke into a trot. He went through that howling mass like a cyclone through the woods. When he had mowed one swath he turned to repeat the process, but there was no need.

Next day Potsdam was full of shaggy men in red shirts with their heads tied up, looking for Antoine Laduke, in sincere desire to "treat" him as long as he would be treated or the remnant of their pay held out.

The Drift of a Derelict.

In St. Nicholas there is an article on "Battling with Wrecks and Derelicts," written by Gustav Kobbe. Mr. Kobbe says: If a derelict is full of lumber, she is like a rock. If water-logged, these silent free-boaters cannot be sunk unless broken in such a manner that the cargo is released. Fire has been found effective in destroying derelicts. It was successful in all but four cases in 45. One of the failures was with the "Fannie E. Wolston," an American schooner, one of the most remarkable derelicts of which we have record. She was abandoned October 15th, 1891, between the capes of Virginia and Hatteras. She drifted about half way across the Atlantic (the Hydrographic Office received numerous reports of her), her course veering to the south, until she was about opposite Madeira. There she zigzagged until February, 1892. Then she drifted south until May of that year. From May until early in 1894 she was drifting towards the Bahamas. February 1st she was about north of Nassau. On the pilot chart for June, 1894, she is located on the eastern border of the Gulf Stream and southeast of Cape Hatteras. In June, 1894, she had been a derelict 950 days, and had drifted over 7,000 miles, the longest track of the kind on record, to find herself within a few miles, comparatively speaking, of the point at which she was abandoned.

Largest Cannon in the World.

The largest cannon in the world was taken by the British when India was conquered. The cannon was cast about the year 1500, and was the work of a chief named Chuleby Koony Khan of Ahmednugger. The inside of the gun is fitted up with seats, and is a favorite place for British officers to go for a quiet noon-day smoke.

Varnish That Wins.

The Persians in 516 B. C. invented a transparent glass varnish, which they laid over sculptured rocks to preserve them from bad weather. The coating has lasted to our day, while the rocks beneath are honeycombed.

Queer Insurance Claim.

A Yarmouth man was smoking a pipe when a spark dropped into the tuck of his trousers and burned a hole. He made a claim for loss under his fire insurance policy and the company paid the damage.

The Shovel Fish.

The shovel fish is so called because it uses its nose to turn over the mud at the bottom of the sea in quest of the worms and small shellfish on which it feeds.

Only a Few Left.

There are only 3,842 left of the Ainu of Japan—the true aborigines of that country. Nearly all of them live on the northern island of Yezo.

Washing Made Easy.

Washing is done in Japan by getting into a boat and letting the garments to be washed drag after the boat by a long string.

A BLUE UMBRELLA.

"Colonel, why did you never marry?" If a cyclone had struck the sharp-featured man who sat with his feet elevated upon the iron railing of the veranda, it could not have caused him to start up more quickly.

"Harry, what made you ask me that question?"

"Why, all men marry; that is, men of means or—anyhow they should marry."

"But you are not married."

"And for a good reason; I am not able."

"But you could support a very comfortable household if you were not—well, what you are," said the Colonel, as he moved away.

"Ah! Hold on, Colonel! Do not leave me in that—he's gone!"

The other, paying no attention to his words, went down the broad steps and walked away into the moonlight.

"I know what he means; he might just as well told me in so many words—spendthrift! Haug it all! Ah, well! Life is too short to fret over mistakes gone and done for. Edith Lisle is—here she comes now."

Was it the tap-tap of tiny feet or the frou-frou of snowy skirts that made Harry Lancaster's heart throb tumultuously. Rising, he tossed his cigar away, lifted his hat and offered the charming creature in white a chair.

"Do not disturb yourself, Mr. Lancaster; I merely came for a brief walk up and down the veranda."

"If you will not rest here for a few moments, will you permit me to offer you my arm for the stroll?"

She laid her dainty hand upon his arm, and the pair strolled slowly to the farther end of the veranda; they turned to retrace their steps when Edith said:

"Was not that a firefly? Over there among the bushes to the left? See, there it is again, and such a glowing one, too!"

"It may be a firefly, but it is my opinion that Col. Drake, of the Regulars, is smoking a cigar out there among the showdowns," said Harry.

"Is that charming old bear here?" she suddenly asked, allowing her hand to slip from the other's arm.

"He came this afternoon."

"And as I was not down to tea, I did not meet him."

"You seem to be acquainted with the Colonel, Miss Lisle."

"Fairly; but really I ought not to have spoken so shockingly about a very fine gentleman. He is quite engaging—but I detest that absurd idea about his strange umbrella."

"Umbrella? What umbrella, may I ask?" inquired Harry, puzzled at her remark.

"Col. Drake possesses a blue, old-fashioned umbrella, which is supposed to be a very potent love-charm or something like that. Plainly, so it is told, when he invites a lady to share his shelter against the rain, her heart is won forever. Strange, is it not?"

"Absurd! Have you ever?"

"No, not yet."

"I should not like you to accept its shelter ever—though I do not believe in such silliness," softly said Harry.

If she understood his meaning she was coy of acknowledgment, for, lifting her hand to his arm again, the pair resumed the stroll.

The next morning Harry Lancaster's heart sank when he looked from the window and saw the leaden clouds scurrying along the darkened sky.

When he entered the dining-room he saw that Miss Lisle's chair was vacant. Ah! the Colonel's chair, too, was vacant! Over his coffee Harry made the resolve to make a break before night. He would ask her for that dainty white hand.

After breakfasting he went to the smoking-room and seated himself near a window overlooking the white stretch of sand, the curling waves and foam-capped billows beyond.

Ah! A couple approached from the beach. The gentleman carried a blue umbrella!

It was the Colonel's blue umbrella; it was the Colonel, but—who was the lady?

"Miss Lisle, by heavens! Pshaw! I'm a fool to think there is anything strange about this. What do I care about the blue umbrella and its potent love charm?"

Two hours afterwards, Edith Lisle blushed as Harry Lancaster asked her a question. She recovered quickly and said softly:

"Mr. Lancaster, the potency of the blue umbrella is not a fiction. He is a charming gentleman, and—always did like soldiers. I—I thank you, and well—I simply said yes under the blue umbrella, and I hope we shall remain friends."

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