AN ANTARCTIC STORM

Braving the Perils of a South Polar Winter's Night.

FIERCE FURY OF THE GALE.

Adventures of a Party of Explorers In a Journey Over the Broken Pack Ice—The Solid Wall of Wind That Flanked a Friendly Iceberg.

The arctic explorer has always had hardship and danger enough, but the antarctic discoverer has far more terrible conditions to meet. Luckily he meets them with all the equipment and method that arctic exploration has taught mankind. Yet they are most dangerous, as the story of those who have lived through the south polar winter night can testify. One of the experiences of Bernacchi on the cruise of the Southern Cross some years ago shows what an antarctic gale means.

He and a comrade, Ellifsen, started out on a short sledge journey to carry provisions from one camp to another. It was in September, and the broken ice pack over which they must travel was but a foot and a half thick and likely to break in pieces afresh or pile up in deadly masses at the mercy of the sea and wind. The two men had three sledges and eighteen dogs. They had hardly started before the wind rose and a gale threatened. Halfway to their destination there was an iceberg imbedded in the pack ice, and they hastened to reach this before the storm should break.

For five hours they toiled over the ice, the wind gradually rising. The gale broke in fury just as they reached the iceberg, under whose lee they pitched a tiny silk tent, into which they crawled after having fed their dogs as best they could. Hour after hour the wind raged, and the thermometer went to 9 degrees below zero. The snow drifted over and into the tent. Sleep was impossible.

The explorers, who had met typhoons in the China seas and cyclones in the tropics, found by the aneroid as well as by their own sensations that this gale surpassed them all. Worst of all, it seemed as if the ice was beginning to crack. They knew well that the iceberg which protected them from the full force of the storm was the most dangerous place possible in other ways, as the ice was sure to separate first immediately round the berg, throwing tent, men and dogs into the icy seas. The cracking of ice was now to be heard above the roar of the wind. They dared not stay in their shelter.

A little to the east, Bernacchi remembered, was a cave in the body of the iceberg. Once in that, they would not at least be precipitated into the sea, even if they were carried away, iceberg and all. It was so dark that the wall of the berg could not be seen even when the hands touched it. The two explorers groped as best they could along the slippery walls, both hands on the ice and their bodies pressed against it. Halfway around they left the lee side and met the gale. It came like a solid thing, bearing them back and down. Not one inch could they move against it, and further exposure meant death. They groped back, blinded, deafened and almost paralyzed with cold, to shelter. Then they commenced a toilsome hunt for a foothold on the lee side somewhere. Toward morning they found a low spur or projection, upon which they scrambled and lay down perfectly exhausted in the snowdrifts, which grew each moment. To this they owed their lives, for the snow soon covered them and kept in the warmth of their bodies.

They dared not sleep for fear of never waking, so they roused each other alternately. At last day broke, and the gale abated. Crawling over the snow, their garments frozen stiff as boards, their beards solid lumps of ice, they managed to reach their tent. The ice had not broken, though it was cracked here and there. They took food, slept, fed their dogs, who were deep in the drifts, but alive, and then courageously went ahead, "not caring to be beaten," as Bernacchi expressed it. It was 8 o'clock at night before they reached camp, but the next day they were exploring and taking photographs and observations just as usual. Man may seem puny against nature, but he conquers her from the arctic to the antarctic by his unconquerable soul.—William Rittenhouse in Forward.

A Clever Barber.

"By heck, Cynthia," drawled old Farmer Hardapple after his visit to Chicago, "them thar city barbers are mind readers."

"That so, Hiram?" said his wife.

"Why, I should say so. The one I met knew that you cut my hair last, and, by gum, he never saw you in his life."—Chicago News.

By Indirection.

Heiress (to her military admirer)—That Mr. Krause is very inquisitive. He asked what my dowry amounted to. Lieutenant—Impertinent fellow! And what did you tell him?—Fliegende Blatter.

Praying Time.

A five-year-old boy on hearing grace asked for the first time at breakfast gravely remarked, "I only say my prayers at night. That is the dangerous time."—Life.

Corruption will never want a pretense.—Cato.

REAL LITERARY LABOR.

Example of Charles Dudley Warner's Infinite Painstaking.

The extraordinary pains and patience with which Charles Dudley Warner did his literary work are shown in an account given by a writer in the New Amstel magazine of the strenuous way in which Mr. Warner produced an obituary notice some years ago.

Professor Edward L. Youmans was a close personal friend of Mr. Warner, and on that account when Mrs. Youmans died the editor of a daily paper asked Mr. Warner to write a sort of personal appreciation of her. This he consented to do.

He was left alone from 10 a. m. until half past 12, when he went to lunch. Returning at 2 o'clock, he worked without interruption until 4 o'clock when he turned over to the editor what he had written.

Yet the work was not complete. Mr. Warner read the first proof and in succession three revised sheets.

Each time he made change after change in phraseology, seeking out the one right word, while even in the nicety of paragraphing he seemed to make clearer what he desired to express. Nor did the close revision end with the marking of the last proof.

After the paper had gone to press and the first sheets had been brought up to the composing room for an O. K. Mr. Warner looked wistfully at the editor and observed:

"Would you object to lifting the form? I see a sentence in the last paragraph that might be somewhat changed. She was too good, you know, to have a slovenly tribute paid to her."

Even the printers refused to get angry over the delay, and forthwith the form was sent up and changes went on for an hour. At last, though publication was delayed fully two hours, the editor, but not Mr. Warner, had the supreme satisfaction of knowing that the work was as nearly perfect as human art could make it, and the edition was sent out.

FIRST NIGHTS.

The Way They Affected Some Famous French Playwrights.

The first night with authors is viewed with different feelings. This is how it affected some famous French playwrights. Sardou's nervousness was well known. Dumas fils was never able to preserve his sangfroid. As soon as the curtain rose Dumas pere would betake himself to a restaurant and dine from as many courses as his new piece had acts. His son reported on the success of the piece. At the first representation of "Toussaint Louverture" Lamartine found his work so tedious that he went to a cafe and read the papers. Balzac when he produced "Resources de Quinola" spent the day in selling tickets at a rate higher than at the box office and reaped a fine return.

Paul de Kock, seated in the orchestra, we also read, protested against his piece and made so much noise that his neighbors demanded silence. Casmir Delavigne remained at home. Alexandre Soumet went to be shaved when "Jeanne d'Arc" was produced. The barber had finished one cheek when the author cried: "Stop! Here are 30 sous. Go round to the theater and see if they hiss or applaud the piece." The barber returned, saying: "It is a success, monsieur. They applaud." "Since it is a success," replied the author, "shave the other." Scribe appeared in the best of spirits and encouraged the actors, but at the end he became nervous and tore his handkerchief with his teeth. Rossini walked about the back of the stage with his cane in his hand. Auber was never present on the first night of his works, and Bayard on reaching the stage is reported to have said that he experienced sudden illness.—New York Mail.

Smoothed the Sea.

A gentleman aboard a steamer running between Southport and Blackpool approached one of the sailors during the passage and remarked to him:

"We have a very smooth sea this morning. It is like a sheet of glass. You don't always have it like this?"

"No, sir," was the answer, "but, you see, they knowed as how you were coming today, so the authorities at Southport telephoned to the corporation at Blackpool, and they at once ordered out the steam roller and rolled the sea down for the occasion. That is why it is so smooth."—London Tit-Bits.

Saved by a Puncture.

"I am a swift runner," said the man who was telling a snake story, "and as I fled down the mountain I outdistanced the huge python that was so relentlessly pursuing me. But these creatures are cunning. To twist itself into the shape of a cart wheel was the work of a moment, and now the python had gained. Faster and faster it rolled down the steep incline. Then, bang! The serpent had struck a sharp, jagged rock and punctured. I was safe."—London Globe.

A Large Toast.

A prominent man, unexpectedly invited to an entertainment, found himself called on for toasts among others. He was unprepared; but, being a quick thinker, he arose and said, "I toast to the toast that was toasted by the toaster who had toasted all the toasts that were ever toasted by a toaster."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Thankfulness.

"Thankfulness," said Uncle Eben, "ain' nuffin' but the common sense needful to recognize some of de good things dis world is chock full of."—Washington Star.

THE OLD SAIL DRILL.

Perils the Modern Warship Men Do Not Have to Face.

One of the dangers and one of the hardest tasks of the man-of-war's man vanished out of his life when, with the supplanting of the frigate by the steam cruiser, the old time sail drill became a thing of the past. Fleets in the old days were continually exercised in making and shortening sail, shifting spars and all similar maneuvers aloft, says Captain J. W. Gambier of the British navy in his "Links In My Life." As the greatest rivalry existed among the crews as to which ship should carry out the evolution first accidents were frequent. Hardly a drill day passed without men being seriously injured.

Once during a drill in Kiel harbor, where the rivalry in the fleet was increased by the eagerness of foreign ships to compete with the English, an unfortunate French midshipman went head first from the mizzen crosstrees of the French flagship to the deck.

That numbers of accidents should take place in sail drill was not astonishing when one remembers that spars measuring perhaps seventy or eighty feet long and weighing two or three tons were whisked about with bewildering speed with nothing but men's hands and brains to guide them; hundreds of men crammed into a space of a few hundred square feet, where nothing but the most marvelous organization and discipline could avert death on deck or aloft.

To the landsman, who understood nothing of the difficulty involved in rapidly shifting these great masts and yards or in reeling and furling thousands of square feet of stiff canvas—perhaps wet or half frozen—the rapidity with which it was done was perhaps the chief wonder.

Ropes, running like lightning through blocks that were instantly too hot from friction to be touched, had to be checked to within a few inches, requiring the utmost coolness and presence of mind, while the officer in command had to superintend what to the uninitiated looked like a tangled mass of cordage, but which was in reality no more in confusion than the threads in a loom.

In an instant this officer might see something going wrong. To delay a single second meant a terrible catastrophe. Every one, alow and aloft, was relying on his judgment.

"Belay! Ease away!"

The order came in an instant. The boatswain's mates repeated it in a particular call which this life and death necessity soon taught every one to understand, the shrill whistles rising above the din of tramping feet and running ropes or the thunderous crash of the great sails in the wind. Death had been averted—or not. If not you looked up and saw some unfortunate man turning head over heels in the air. Your heart stood still. Would he catch hold of something, even if only to break his fall, or would he come battering on the deck? It was a mere toss up. If he was killed outright it generally stopped the drill for the day; if he was only seriously injured the drill went on, for this was part of the lesson that must be learned—that in peace, as in war, one must take his chances.

A Short Verse.

An Englishman named Thomas Thorp died, leaving his fortune to a poor relative on condition that a headstone, with the name of the said Thomas Thorp and a verse of poetry, be erected over the grave. Costing so much a word to chisel letters on the stone, the poor relative ordered that the poetry should be brief. Upon his refusal to approve, on account of their length, the lines

Here lies the corp
Of Thomas Thorp

the following was finally ordered and accepted:

Thorp's
Corpse.

The Gingerbread Tree.

There is a species of palm, growing to a height of from twenty-five to thirty feet, in Egypt, Arabia, Abyssinia and Nubia which produces its fruit in long clusters, each containing from 100 to 200. These fruits are of an irregular form, of a rich yellowish brown color and are beautifully polished. In upper Egypt they form part of the food of the poorer classes of inhabitants, the part eaten being the fibrous, mealy husk, which tastes almost exactly like gingerbread, whence the popular name of gingerbread tree in Egypt. Hyphoene thebaica is the botanical name of this palm.

How It Struck Him.

It was 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in a crowded Brooklyn trolley car, and above the noise arose the wails of a leather lunged baby protesting against everything. After two miles of this din the mother left with her child, when a young man in the front end of the car thus expressed his sentiments:

Gee whiz! I'm glad I'm free!
No wedding bells for me.

The result can be more easily imagined than described.—New York Post.

Women and Ships.

"But, Mr. Mainbrace, why do they always call a ship 'she?'"

"Lor', miss, you wouldn't ask that ef you'd ever tried to steer one."—Kansas City Independent.

On the Safe Side.

"In the matter of drinking," mused the philosopher with the impressionistic nose, "be sure you are right and you won't get a head."—Philadelphia Record.

The man to whom you owe money never rests.—Atchison Globe.

Cause of Car Sickness.

W. C. Wood attributes car sickness to the nystagmus produced by looking out of the car windows. Look out of a car window and observe how rapidly the telegraph poles flit by. Each one is seen and involuntarily followed by the eye until it is opposite, when the eye shifts to the one following. This is true of near buildings. Objects farther away seem to move slower, and those very far off seem to be almost stationary until the whole landscape appears to be revolving round a common center. The unconscious effort to take in everything produces a rapid lateral oscillation of the eyeballs, as any one can observe by watching the eyes of his fellow passengers. The eye strain is enormous and is the chief factor in producing car sickness. This can be proved by asking a patient who is subject to car sickness to look steadily at a mirror which is moved rapidly to and fro or tilted backward and forward. He will immediately complain of nausea and vertigo. The treatment consists of advising the patient to avoid looking out of the car windows and in giving him a grain of citrated caffeine shortly before he takes the cars and repeating it every hour as long as there is any tendency to be sick. The author has been enabled by this procedure to relieve many sufferers from car sickness.—New York Medical Journal.

The Ship's Bell Clock.

In its most ordinary form the ship's bell clock is a stout, well made clock, a good timekeeper, contained in a round nickel plated case six or seven inches in diameter which is mounted on a board that can be hung on or screwed to a wall or bulkhead. The face of the clock, the dial, is of finished steel, and its pointers are of blued steel, so that with its nickeled case the whole clock has a metallic, solid, serviceable look.

Attached to a projection of the board upon which the clock is placed, outside the clock and immediately below it, is the clock's gong, with the hammers—there are two of them—brought down into it on arms extending through an opening in the clock's case and striking on the gong's inner side. It is a sturdy gong two or three inches in diameter, and it sounds with a strong, clear, resolute note when the hammer strikes it. On this clock's face you can tell the time in the usual way, but the hours are struck as they are at sea on a ship's bell.—New York Sun.

Fresh.

There was no doubt about it. He was very angry when he entered the village grocery store and demanded to see the proprietor.

"You sold my wife some eggs yesterday, Mr. Peavey," he said when the grocer appeared.

"Waal, yes," said Mr. Peavey genially, "believe I did."

"And you told her that they were fresh eggs," continued the visitor.

"Waal, yes; it seems to me I did," said Mr. Peavey.

"But, see here, Peavey, you had no business to say they were fresh eggs."

"Why not? I bought 'em for fresh—from Si Wiley too."

"I don't believe it. Si Wiley's an honest man."

"Waal, Si said it, all right. He come in here with his basket full of 'em and put 'em down on the counter and traded 'em off for a box of sody biscuits."

"When was this?"

"Oh, I dunno. 'Bout six weeks ago, I guess."—Baltimore American.

How He Knew.

A ragman who was gathering up wornout clothing in the country purchased a pair of discarded trousers at a farmhouse and remarked to the man of the house as he paid for the stuff he had bought:

"I see, sir, that you are about to lose your land on a mortgage."

"Guess you are right," said the discouraged looking farmer, "but will you tell me how the Sam Hill you found that out?"

"Easy enough," said the cheerful ragman as he settled back on the seat of his peddling wagon. "I notice that these old pants are completely played out, so far as the part of 'em you sat down on is concerned, but they show mighty little wear anywhere else."—Exchange.

Just His Luck.

"William, Freddie informs me that his teacher has decided to advance him from the sixth to the seventh grade owing to his fine deportment and his praiseworthy attention to his studies."

"Pshaw! That's just my luck!"

"Why, what makes you say that?"

"I had it all figured out that I was going to be about $10 ahead at the end of this month. Now it will be necessary to buy a new set of schoolbooks."—Chicago Record-Herald.

The Invisible Point.

It was an awfully old joke, but the American thought it might cause his English friend to generate a smile.

"Just before I sailed for Liverpool," said the American, "I dreamed that I was dead, and the heat woke me up."

"So?" rejoined the Englishman seriously. "The weather must be beastly hot in America."—Chicago News.

Luck.

"Do you believe there is anything in luck?" asked the young man.

"Yes," answered the home grown philosopher. "There is a lot of intelligence and perseverance in it."—Exchange.

In Saxony no one is permitted to shoe horses unless he has passed a public examination and proves that he is properly qualified.

The Senate's Hole In the Wall.

When the nineteenth century was as yet only half grown, senators applied customarily for their toddies at the so called Hole in the Wall, a small circular room just off the postoffice of the upper house. The latter body then occupied what is now the chamber of the supreme court, and the postoffice was across the main corridor of the building on the same floor. When a wearer of the toga found himself in need of a "snifter" he had only to cross over to the mails department and pass through it to the little circular room aforesaid, which was about the size of a pantry. The Hole in the Wall was the first senate restaurant, and the bill of fare for edibles was short, though to the point. There was ham, guaranteed to have been smoked for six months, a veritable sublimation of the pork product; there were corned beef and bread and cheese, but very little else. They served, however, as an accompaniment for the fluids, and when the Hole was crowded, as was often the case, senators ate their sandwiches outside, in the postoffice.—Washington Post.

The Aurora Borealis.

The aurora borealis, or northern light, is something that we have all heard about, but very few, perhaps, can give any explanation of it. No one definitely knows what causes it, but the scientists are pretty well agreed that it is due to electricity. They believe that the light is made by the recomposition of the positive and negative electricity always in the upper and lower strata of air, respectively. M. Lenstrom made an interesting experiment in Finland in 1882, his object being to determine the nature of the aurora. He had the peak of a mountain surrounded by a copper wire, pointed at intervals with tin nibs. When he had charged the wire with electricity a yellow light appeared on the tin tips, and an examination of the light by the spectroscope revealed the greenish yellow ray that is a marked feature of the aurora. This evidence among scientists is almost convincing, for it is by means of the spectroscope that we discover the constituent parts of the sun and the stars.—Exchange.

"Thou Diest on Point of Fox."

Fox blades were celebrated all through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for their excellent temper, and mention of them is frequent in English drama. This is their history:

There was a certain Julian del Rei, believed to be a Morisco, who set up a forge at Toledo in the early part of the sixteenth century and became famous for the excellence of his sword blades, which were regarded as the best of Toledo. That city had for many ages previous been renowned for swordmaking, it being supposed that the Moors introduced the art, as they did so many good things, from the east.

Julian del Rei's mark was a little dog, which came to be taken for a fox, and so the "fox blade" or simply "fox" for any good sword. See "Henry V.," act 4, scene 4, "Thou diest on point of fox." The brand came to be imitated in other places, and there are Solingen blades of comparatively modern manufacture which still bear the little dog of Julian del Rei.—London Notes and Queries.

A Royal Snake Slaughterer.

The "secretary bird" is one of the most precious birds in South Africa. It is royal game, and any person destroying one is liable to a fine of £50. Majestic looking birds, they stand about three feet high and generally go in pairs. They are of drab color, with black, feathery legs, and are valued for their propensity for killing snakes. Where the secretary bird is seen there are sure to be many reptiles about. The bird beats down its adversary first with one wing and then with the other, at the same time trampling on it with its feet until the snake is sufficiently stunned to catch it by the head with its claws. Then the bird rises far up in the air and drops its victim to the ground, to be killed. By this means thousands of venomous reptiles are destroyed.—London Scraps.

Natural History.

"Whah is you been workin'?" asked Miss Miami Brown.

"Up to one o' deshere garridges whar dey keep de automobiles."

"I s'pose you likes 'em better dan mules."

"Well, de diff'unce is dat a mule kicks wif his hin' feet an' de automobile is mo' li'ble to butt same as a goat."—Washington Star.

Busy Woman.

Every monthly magazine carries as many as two continued stories in it. When a man takes six it means that his wife is carrying twelve continued stories in her head in addition to doing the cooking and trying to find out how much the new hat cost worn by the woman next door.—Oil City Derrick.

FOOD FOR THE SEINE.

An Incident of Whistler's Student Days In Paris.

The early scenes in "Trilby" have shown us the hilarious squalor of the student life in Paris when Whistler joined the studio that Gleyre carried on in succession to Delaroche. It was the Bohemia, barely modernized, of Murger's novel, and the shifts to which these raw recruits in art descended furnished Whistler for life with some of his raciest stories. Once when an American friend unearthed him Whistler was living on the proceeds of a wardrobe. One hot day he pawned his coat for an iced drink. Invited once to the American embassy, he had to borrow Poynter's dress suit. But the best story of these frolicsome days arises from the eternal copying in the Louvre, either on commission or on "spec," which kept them alive between remittances. Whistler's chum, Ernest Delannoy, had done a gorgeous replica of Veronese's "Marriage Feast at Cana" that took when framed the pair of them to carry it. They tried it on every dealer up and down both sides of the Seine until the first price of 500 francs had dropped with several thuds to 100, then 20, then 10, then 5. Suddenly the dignity of art asserted itself.

On the Pont des Arts they lifted the huge canvas. "Un," they said, with a great swing, "deux, trois—v'lan!" and over it went into the water with a splash. Sergents de ville came running, omnibuses stopped, and boats pushed out on the river. Altogether it was an immense success, and they went home enchanted.—Pall Mall Gazette.

A Pair of Poets.

Hearing a noise in the street before his house one morning, Robert Browning, the poet, went to his window and saw a great crowd gazing at some Chinamen in gorgeous costumes who were just leaving their carriages to mount his steps. Presently they were announced as the Chinese minister at the court of St. James and his suit. A solemn presentation having taken place, Browning said to the interpreter, "May I ask to what I am indebted for the honor of his excellency's visit?" The interpreter replied, "His excellency is a poet in his own country." Thereupon the two poets shook hands heartily. Browning then said, "May I ask to what branch of poetry his excellency devotes himself?" To which the interpreter answered, "His excellency devotes himself to poetical enigmas." At this Browning, recognizing fully the comic element in the situation, extended his hand most cordially, saying: "His excellency is thrice welcome. He is a brother indeed!"

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