

ATTACKED BY SHARKS

A Whale's Terrific Battle With a School of Thrashers.

AN AWE INSPIRING CONTEST.

The Unequal Fight Was Ended by the Death of the Courageous Mammal, Who Was Torn to Shreds by Her Ferocious Assailants.

Early one morning while engaged in building new quarters for the lighthouse keeper at Breaksea Island, near Rottnest, Western Australia, the contractor and his men noticed a bull whale, with a cow and calf, passing the island some distance off. They watched them with interest for awhile, noting the immense size of the two parents and the methodical regularity with which columns of water rose from their blowholes and then resumed their labors.

An hour or so later—about 9 o'clock, to be exact—the men were startled by an extraordinary noise, apparently coming from the eastern end of the island, a noise unlike anything they had ever heard before. Dropping their tools and starting toward the east, they beheld such a sight as it falls to the lot of few people to witness. There, not 500 yards from the shore, was being waged a battle to the death—a fight between the great cow whale previously seen and a school of thrasher sharks. The calf was swimming about distractedly, but the old bull had disappeared, having basely deserted his family at the first approach of danger.

The sharks, as though acting in accordance with some preconcerted plan, had completely surrounded the two whales and, apparently realizing that nothing was to be feared from the calf, concentrated all their efforts upon the cow. Again and again they charged in upon her, their jaws snapping, tearing at her mighty sides until the sea was red with blood. Meanwhile the cow lashed her tail furiously, hurling up sheets of reddened water and occasionally crashing down with terrific force upon one of her voracious opponents. Maddened with pain and rage, she dashed this way and that, but the sharks hung to her side with a persistence and ferocity that made the fascinated onlookers shudder. Now and again the wildly lashing tail would catch one of the assailants, driving it beneath the waves—no doubt killed or disabled—but the remainder rushed in undismayed, tearing viciously at the mammal's bleeding flanks or butting her with the force of battering rams.

Presently the spellbound spectators realized two facts—first, that the calf had disappeared in the melee and, second, that the tortured whale was undoubtedly becoming weaker. It was obvious that the unequal struggle could have only one ending. Still, however, she fought on doggedly, wringing admiration and sympathy by her exhibition of hopeless courage. Altering her tactics, by a supreme effort she hurled her whole great bulk clear of the water for a moment, and the fascinated onlookers beheld the sharks hanging from various parts of her gleaming body by their serrated teeth. Then down she went again with a crash like thunder, and for an instant whale and sharks were buried amid masses of foam, heavily colored with the poor mammal's lifeblood. Rising again, she essayed another change of plan, making for the rocks and desperately striving to rub off the clinging sharks against their edges. But the thrashers were equal to the occasion. While those on the outside maintained their grip, the others dived under their enemy and charged her anew, tearing at the whale's side in an ecstasy of ferocity that was bloodcurdling to witness.

More and more feeble grew the whale's struggles, and at last, to the heartfelt relief of the spectators, for her death fight had been terrible to behold, the great body turned over and sank, beneath the red tinted water. The unequal battle was over, having lasted from 9 o'clock until noon, as awe inspiring a contest as man was ever privileged to witness. The men went back to their work greatly impressed by the unique spectacle, and expressions of sympathy for the whale were heard on every side.

Forty-eight hours afterward the whale's body, which had in the meantime become distended with gas, rose to the surface and exploded with a roar like a miniature powder magazine, causing the startled people to rush to the shore to discover what had happened. On examination of the remains it was discovered that every shred of the outer flesh of the whale had been torn off by the sharks, who had doubtless gone off to repeat their tactics upon some other hapless leviathan.—Victor Pitt-Kethley in St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

What He Sold.

One of the witnesses in a case in a Dublin court was asked, "Did you sell Major Studdert a horse?" "No, sor." "Did your father sell Major Studdert a horse?" "No, sor." "Did your grandfather sell him a horse?" "No, sor." "Well, then, did any member of your family sell Major Studdert anything?" "Yes, sor." "Who did, then?" "I did, sor." "And what did you sell Major Studdert?" "I sold him a mare, sor." The counsel sat down, and the court roared.

Politeness is like an air cushion—there's nothing in it, but it eases the joints wondrously.

THE UMPIRE.

Did You Ever Hear the Fans Cheer Him For His Work?

There is one unique phase connected with the life of the umpire which perhaps has never occurred to most lovers of baseball. You have often been to a theater and seen the hero or heroine—yes, even the villain—win round after round of applause for some excellent bit of acting.

You have been to a football game and heard some ball gladiator cheered to the echo for making a long run that resulted in a touchdown or for a flying tackle that prevented imminent defeat. When some player is injured they convey their sympathy to him by cheering his name.

You have been to a ball game and heard the fans cheer some crack pitcher because in a pinch he fanned some mighty batter. It's just the natural way of the American to show admiration and appreciation.

Rack your brain, think your hardest, recall every game you have ever attended, then see if you can remember a time when the umpire drew applause for his work. Have you ever heard the fans cheer the name of the umpire after he has worked a fifteen inning game which fairly bristled with close and unusual plays and got away without a klick? If you can recall such an incident, just dot it down in your notebook that you were present at a very, very unusual happening.

Do they cheer the umpire's name when he stops a foul tip with his shin or has a swift shoot bounced off his mask? Yes, they do—not. Any injury to the umpire usually gets a round of derisive laughter from the crowd. Generally, if he has been going bad, some leather lunged individual requests that he be killed or chloroformed. Of course there are many people in the stands who sympathize with the umpire. Their sympathy is usually silence. That isn't much balm to his injury or feelings.

Applause would sound so strange to an umpire's ears that he would probably become so thoroughly frightened he would jump the back fence.—Billy Evans in New York Tribune.

THE TELESCOPE.

Gallei's Rude Instrument the First Used in Astronomy.

The first telescope was pointed toward the sky on Jan. 7, 1610, when Gallei first tried his rude instrument and was rewarded by discovering some of the moons of Jupiter. No great magnifying power was needed for this, as at least one of the moons is large enough to be seen by the naked eye did not the nearness of the brilliant planet prevent this. Lenses had been known for a long time and were at that time in common use by near-sighted persons.

The name of the real discoverer of the telescope seems to be unknown, but the accepted story now is that two young sons of a Middlebury optician named Lippersley some time between 1695 and 1708, while playing with some lenses, happened to hold two of them at a distance from each other and were surprised and delighted to find that the weather vane on a neighboring tower seemed to come near them when looked at through the two lenses. In April, 1609, a little telescope made in Holland was offered for sale in Paris.

The next month Gallei, then a professor in the university at Padua, heard of this instrument and realized at once its importance in the study of astronomy. From the description of the Dutch instrument he had one made at once, and in August he astounded the people of Venice by showing them from the top of the campanile persons entering the doors of the church at Murano. This spyglass was less than two inches in diameter and magnified three times. From this crude instrument of Gallei to the monster telescopes forty inches in diameter of the present day is the development of only three centuries.—Argonaut.

An Interruption.

Among the primary pupils enrolled in a Baltimore school is the son of a prominent business man of that city, says Harper's Magazine. One afternoon at close of school the youngster sought out his father in his office, to whom he said:

"Dad, I'm getting tired of school. I think I'll quit."

"Why," asked the astonished parent, "what's the matter, Tommy? I thought you were fond of going to school."

"So I am, dad," responded the youngster, suppressing a yawn. "but it breaks up the day so."

His Opening Remark.

A congressman had returned to his constituency to deliver a carefully prepared address. The day arrived, and, loosening the first button of his Prince Albert, he uttered his carefully prepared prefatory remarks, and to this day he cannot understand the ripple of laughter which swept over his audience when he uttered his opening sentence, "Before I begin to speak to you I desire to say something." He said it.—Kansas City Star.

On the Way.

"I understand that you owe everything to your wife," said the tactless relative.

"No," answered Mr. Meekton, "but I will if I don't stop playing bridge with her and her mother."

Her Slip.

He—Do you think if I were to kiss you your dog would bite me? She—Well—er—his never does it to any one before.

The Making of Lenses.

The essential part of any device for the study of the starry millions—the suns, planets, comets and the nebulae that are perhaps new worlds in the making—is the lens or the optical train that consists of a series of lenses. It is this that makes the modern science of astronomy possible. There is absolutely no other human occupation that requires the accuracy of observation and the delicacy of touch that are requisite for the making of the finest lenses. These are the most perfect products of human hands. It may convey some idea of the labor required in the making of a large lens to say that at least one year's time is required for the grinding and polishing of a thirty inch object glass. A little lens two inches in diameter requires the unremitting care and attention of a skilled workman for two or three days. It is easy, then, to see why it is that even lenses of high class photographic work are costly. A forty inch object glass for a large telescope cannot be made in much less than four years' time, and if everything does not go just right it may require much longer than that.—Kansas City Star.

Persian Jest.

An exceedingly ugly man, says the Persian Joe Miller, was once in the mosque, asking pardon of Allah for his sins and praying to be delivered from the fires of hell. One who overheard his prayers said to him: "Wherefore, O friend, wouldst thou cheat hell of such a countenance? Art thou reluctant to burn up a face like that?"

Another story the Persian jester tells is that a certain person with a hideous nose was once on a time wooing a woman. Describing himself to her and trying to make an attractive picture, he said, "I am a man devoid of lightness and frivolity, and I am patient in bearing afflictions!"

"Aye," said the woman, "wert thou not patient in bearing afflictions thou hadst never endured thy nose these forty years!"

All of which is more witty than kind.—Harper's.

Bohemians and Wedding Rings.

"Here are two wedding rings that I have just made over," said the jeweler. "They are for Bohemian women. They lost their own rings, so they had their husbands' rings cut down to fit. That is a custom in their country. Both husband and wife wear wedding rings there. If the man loses his ring he has to buy a new one, but if the woman loses hers she wears her husband's. I do a good deal of that kind of work. Other women who lose wedding rings just buy another one and say nothing about it, but these women are too conscientious for that. Usually I have to make the man's ring smaller, but once in awhile it has to be spliced to make it fit. The women are always considerably chagrined over the splicing and offer all kinds of explanations to account for their big fingers."—New York Sun.

The Roulette Ball.

That capricious little ball that decides our fortunes at the ever fascinating game of roulette at Monte Carlo occasionally flies from the skillful croupier's hand, though not often. One afternoon it slipped from its manipulator's fingers and found its way into an Englishman's coat pocket. So impressed was the Englishman that he promptly lost a couple of hundred pounds. But the little ball once found a far stranger destination than that. Escaping from the croupier's hand, it flew straight into the mouth of a German onlooker, and he was so impressed that he promptly swallowed it.—London Bystander.

Tea in Paraguay.

When the natives of Paraguay drink tea they do not pour it from a teapot into a cup, but fill a goblet made up of a pumpkin or gourd and then suck up the hot liquid through a long reed. Moreover, the tea which they use is altogether different from that which comes from China, being made out of dried and roasted leaves of a palm-like plant which grows in Paraguay and southern Brazil. The natives say that this tea is an excellent remedy for fever and rheumatism.

Sparrowgrass.

It is stated that a well known riddle was written by a costermonger. The riddle in question is a charade and runs as follows:

My first's a little bird as 'ops;
My second's useful in 'ay crops;
My 'ole is good with mutton chops.

The answer, of course, is "sparrowgrass," which the learned Dr. Parr always insisted on using in preference to the politer "asparagus."—London Notes and Queries.

A Real Poet.

"Poetry," said the literary girl, "is the art of expressing intense feeling in figurative speech."

"In that case," replied Miss Cayenne, "the man who writes baseball news is sure a poet."—Washington Star.

She Wanted to Know.

Bridegroom—Now that we are married, darling, we must have no more secrets from each other. Bride—Then tell me truly, Jack, how much did you really pay for that engagement ring?—Illustrated Bits.

She Was Numerous.

"I want a license to marry the best girl in the world," said the young man.

"Funny, isn't it?" commented the clerk. "That makes 1,300 licenses for that girl this season."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

I do not know of any way so sure of making others happy as of being so oneself.—Sir Arthur Helps.

Dying to Order.

Dying to order is one of the most sacred customs of the American Indian. Many years ago Standing Elk went to Major James McLaughlin, the author of "My Friend the Indian," and said, "Father, my wife will die today, and she wants a coffin for you."

The major asked him what the ailment was, and he replied:

"Just nothing but that she heard the ghosts calling and must go."

Somebody had told her, it turned out, that she was sick, so she had "painted for death," and all her relatives had gathered about to bemoan her—and incidentally divide her property as soon as she was dead. There was no use in the major's arguing about it, so he had the coffin made.

In many cases those "painted for death" are actually killed by dying, but Mrs. Standing Elk was still too vigorous. Finally in despair she carried the coffin into the house on her own shoulders, and several years later the major saw it still standing on end in her house. Shelves had been fitted into it, and it was doing duty as a cupboard.—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Improving Americans.

"Nothing is fixed but the certainty of change," said Goethe, and we know that the future American will represent a change. He may be taller or shorter or thinner or fatter than the American of today, but there is nothing in the existing state of society—and we use society in its broad sense—to indicate that he will not be better in many ways. Confidence in this is based largely on the evident determination of the American of today to leave our institutions and our ideals better than he found them. Every American, native or foreign born, wants his children to have a better education than it was possible for him to secure. He wants to have his children live in a community of higher standards and ideals than he has; he wants betterment in local, state and national conditions, and the result of the want will be improvement and a demand by his children for still greater improvement.—St. Paul Pioneer-Press.

An Economical Man.

A commercial traveler told of a man who was riding on a train and pretended to be lame after eating a sandwich. The man opened his grip and took out a hot water bag. "He got a sympathetic porter," the commercial man continues, "to fill the water bag with boiling water, and then he opened up his lunch basket, took out a piece of fried steak and warmed it up on the water bag. You talk about your light housekeeping! Then after he had warmed the steak he cut it all up with a pair of scissors and fed it to himself with a pair of sugar tongs, because he would not take a chance with a fork going around a curve. But his finish was a limit. After he had eaten the steak he unscrewed the stopper of the water bag and poured himself out a cup of hot coffee. He had the grounds in the bag all the time."

In a Quandary.

The young lady sighed deeply and was almost affected to tears.

"Harold," she said, "declares that if I don't marry him he will end his life. And I am afraid he will."

She stifled a sob, then continued: "And Randolph declares that if I don't marry him he will go into politics and become great and famous, and then he says I shall see what I have missed. And I am afraid he will keep his word too."

Overcome by emotion, she buried her face in her hands, not knowing whether to save a life or to spare the country another politician.—Exchange.

An Amendment.

"Are you ready to live on my income?" he asked softly.

She looked up into his face trustfully.

"Certainly, dearest," she answered. "If—"

"If what?"

"If you get another one for yourself."—New York Journal.

The Dreaded Doctor.

"How did you like your dinner?" inquired the epicure.

"Well," answered the dyspeptic, "it was admirable in every respect. But my doctor has put me into such an apprehensive frame of mind that whenever I really enjoy eating anything I become utterly miserable."

The Analysis.

"Did you have the soil of your backyard analyzed by the agricultural department?"

"Yes. They said it consisted largely of glass, tin and putty, with traces of builder's lime, and suggested that it might do to raise a mortgage on."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Great Achievement.

"And what do you regard as the greatest triumph of modern surgery?"

"Collecting the bills," promptly responded the great practitioner.—London Spare Moments.

Especially in the Subways.

"There ain't but one trouble with this here city air," said Uncle Rufe, sniffing the atmosphere speculatively; "it do need ventilatin'."—Holland's Magazine.

His Reason.

"Why do you always leave the house, James, when I begin to sing the old songs?" pouted Mrs. Howlitt.

"Fresh air," said Howlitt.—Harper's Weekly.

He who has the truth in his heart need never fear the want of persuasion on his tongue.—Ruskin.

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BULLETIN

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