

SCARES ARE EASY AT SEA.

THE GREAT MAJORITY CAUSED BY TRIVIAL THINGS.

Not at All Difficult to Get Up a Little Panic Among the Passengers on a Liner—Weather Which Causes Most Frights, Not Really Dangerous—Fog a Cause For Much More Anxiety—Stories of Both.

Just as soon as the skies take on a tinge of winter's gray the ships that go "coastwise, cross seas, round the world and back again" begin to bring tales of desperate struggles with giant combers, of panics and hairbreadth escapes, and all sorts of thrilling adventures on the gray winter seas. Once in a while there comes in a liner which has met something bigger than usual in the way of waves and then there is sure to be a story of panic among the passengers. It's the easiest thing in the world to get up a sort of panic among the passengers on a liner. A good many of them are chronically in a state of funk. When the weather gets a bit rough another lot get scared, and when the fog whistle begins to hoot, there are anxious faces, usually, peering over the rail.

Now, fog is dangerous, but rough weather, comparatively speaking, is not. There is more danger of collision, which is the worst thing that can happen at sea, in fog than at any other time, and may occur in spite of the utmost care and watchfulness on the part of officers and crew. But it is extremely doubtful if the records can show that any liner ever foundered when the primary cause of the accident was tempestuous weather. Popular belief is all the other way, and when Captain Frederick Watkins reported at the close of a winter voyage from Liverpool a few years ago that in a hurricane

IN MID-OCEAN

he had stopped the engines of the Paris and let her fall off into the trough of the sea to ease her, his report created a sensation.

"Of course I did," he said, when he was questioned about it; "that was the simplest thing to do. Nothing could happen to the ship. The weather doesn't blow that could founder her. She's too big and too staunch."

If a demonstration of the ability of the modern passenger-carrying ocean liner to withstand rough weather needed a demonstration it could have found several in the last few years. There was an accident to the Paris, when with three compartments full of water she rode out a storm and got into Queenstown with everybody safe. There was the Spree, which went through a frightful storm, with the tall shaft broken and the after compartments filled. There was the Umbria, which lay for a week with her nose held up to the winter gales by her sea anchors while her engineers patched up the broken trust shaft. There was the Ems, which lost her screw and drifted around for ten days before she was towed into the Azores with all on board sound and well. And there was the Gascogne, last winter, which got into New York eight days overdue, having been out in the worst storms of a particularly stormy season, and not under control for a week because of a broken piston. These things lend force to the statement that most of the frights which the passengers on the big liners get every winter are trivial or causeless. Every time a ship gets in and reports any such experience as La Champagne reported last week it is certain that the passengers will spin yarns to their friends ashore which would put an able seaman to the blush. These things also lend point to the story one of the most popular

A BIG LINER

sometimes tells when a good friend visits him in his room up on the bridge deck.

It was a long time ago, when this captain was in command of the old City of Chicago, whose bones lie on the old Head of Kinsale, close by Daunt's Rock. The voyage was to the westward from Liverpool. It was in the early fall, and the first cabin was full to overflowing with the first home-comers of the summer European tourists. The weather had been superb all the way, and the ship's company were congratulating themselves on an unusually quick and pleasant voyage. It happened that one morning about 2 o'clock the captain went upon the bridge to look around. He has made now nearly 600 voyages across the Atlantic ocean and he has seen the ocean in every phase. Never, he says, has he seen such a sight as that which lay before him on this occasion, when he got to the bridge. The sea lay perfectly still, its surface unbroken by even a flaw of wind. Except for the occasional long heave of a heavy swell, the last memory of some long-gone storm that rose and fell so gradually as to be perceptible only to the practised eyes of an old sailor, no motion of the water could be discerned. The sky was perfectly cloudless, a faint pale blue in the light of the full moon. The captain leaned against the rail of the bridge and watched "the old lost star wheel back again" in the flat northern heavens. Somewhere, behind him, a long way off, there floated up from below the music of the engines, singing, "Rigidity, rigidity, rigidity, unvarying, unflinching, rigidity." He heard it without listening, and caught the rhythm of it unconsciously. A long strip of gleaming silver lay on the glass-like surface of the water. It buckled ever so lightly once in a while as it caught the heavy swell, and it led clear to the horizon, where it vanished suddenly in a wild leap up to the moon.

The captain forgot the ship and the ship's company. He did not remember the thousand and more human being in his care. The responsibility slipped off his shoulders and he was lost in contemplation of the

WONDERFUL SPECTACLE

of the ocean. Then suddenly the music from the engine room stopped. The great machines ceased their singing and a tremor ran through the ship as the screw quit marking the time of the song. The captain came back to him-

self with a start and swung round to see what had happened.

"Something is wrong in the engine room sir," said the officer in charge on the bridge with that peculiar garrulity which always manifests itself in such superfluous speech.

"I know," answered the captain shortly. He walked briskly back along the bridge deck to the engine hatch and called down to the engineer on watch and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing at all, sir," was the answer. "We'll be going again in a minute. She's thrown an oil cup and the new one is almost in place."

The captain turned and started back toward the bridge, then something he saw stopped him short. It was the figure of a woman in a long flowing robe of white. Her heavy hair hung loosely down her back, and in her arms she carried her clothing loosely thrown together, just as she had gathered it up when the sudden stopping of the engines had wakened her with a start that sent her leaping from her berth with a frightful clutching about her heart and the awful cold fear that some terrible accident had befallen the ship. Opposite the captain as he stood on the bridge deck at the corner of the engine hatch, a life boat swung on its davits. Under the boat a bo's'n's gang was washing down the deck. The woman saw the men at work the instant she darted out from the forward companion way, and she turned aft on the deck and ran toward them with all her speed.

The captain, watching her closely, saw that she was one of those who sat at his own table in the saloon. In the flood of moon light her face was ghostly white. Her eyes were wide open and staring, and her expression was one of

BLANK TERROR.

The captain stepped forward to call her, then a better thought came to him and he stepped back partly out of her range of vision. As she ran toward the bo's'n's crew she saw that the men were not clearing away the life boat, but that they were leisurely and peacefully cleaning up for the morning's game of shuffleboard. But she did not slacken her speed. Not a thing was in her way. The deck of the old City of Chicago was broad and clear, unobstructed by stanchions or ventilators, or the fixed settees that spoil the promenades of the newest liners. There was nothing to hinder her flight, and without swerving from her course in the slightest degree the frightened woman fled down the deck at top speed and vanished down the after companion-way.

The brief fifteen seconds that it took her to run the length of the deck sufficed to give her a conception of the magnitude of the night. She never stopped to find out what had frightened her. She only knew that she had been fooled, and with a woman's quick wit, she made the best of it. The bo's'n's gang stopped their work in astonishment as she swept by. The captain chuckled as he went back to the bridge.

Next morning at breakfast she faced the captain unflinchingly. Perhaps she had not seen him, but if she had she did not betray herself by so much as the drooping of an eyelid.

"It's curious," said the captain to one of those at the table, "what little things sometimes frighten people at sea."

She looked up at him quickly, but he did not seem to notice it, and went on, without looking at her.

"On our last voyage this way we had a bit of rough weather one night. My chief officer was on the bridge, and I went down through the ship to see if any one was stirring. In one of the alleyways I met an Englishman and his son. They had their clothing in their arms and were running for the deck. We shipped a little sea and it had smashed a ventilator. That frightened them. I said, 'Sh-h, some one will see you,' and they both ran back to their rooms."

A story of a different sort is that of the passengers in the Red Star liner Westernland on an outward voyage several years ago. It was on the third day of the voyage when the ship was leaving the Grand Banks.

A HEAVY FOG

prevailed, so that it was almost impossible to see a ship's length ahead. All the morning the fog whistle blew fifteen seconds out of every two minutes. The passengers, who had begun to get a little acquainted with one another, gathered in little knots and discussed the nasty weather. The lookout in the crow's nest was doubled and two men were sent up to the bows. About noon, just after the Westernland's syren had ceased one of its uncomfortable hoots, there comes an answering whistle out from the fog dead ahead. The Westernland's syren hooted again, and immediately there came an answer. The second whistle seemed to be directly in the Red Star liner's course.

The passengers left their steamer chairs and gathered along the forward rails. They peered anxiously out into the fog, but the brightest eye couldn't distinguish anything but the impenetrable wall of gray mist. The ship had been running at reduced speed, but now her engines were slowed down until she seemed barely to crawl along. For a time the intervals between the hoarse hoots of the syren were kept at a minute and forty-five seconds. But the whistle ahead kept steadily repeating the warning, and the interval on the Westernland was shortened to fifty seconds, the hoot being prolonged for ten seconds. A quartermaster stood on the bridge deck, watch in hand, and marked the time with the whistle cord. Nothing more could be done by the officers of the ship than what they were doing. They could only wait. The passengers along the rails were too interested or too anxious to go down to luncheon, and 1 o'clock found them all still there.

Then relief came, as unexpectedly and suddenly as the warning of danger. It came with a gust of wind that ruffled the heavy fog. The breeze blew up. It picked up the heavy fog and whisked it away as an autumn whirlwind scatters the first fallen leaves. And as the fog flew before the wind the lookouts and the officers on the bridge saw squarely ahead of the Westernland, bound east, and on the same course a little cargo boat, with her "load line over her hatch" and the black smoke beginning again to roll out of her squat funnel. There was a roar from the Westernland's whistle. The bells in the engine room jingled and she forged ahead at full speed, veering a little from her course to pass the freighter. As the liner passed there was a fluttering of signals, a dip of the flag, and the incident was closed.

Which shows the difference in being frightened by fog and frightened by something else.

HEALTH.

Light and Disease.

Two objections are commonly brought against the disinfectants recommended for general use: they are expensive and cannot be used promiscuously without more or less damage. It will be welcome news, therefore, that investigations are now going on, looking to some practical application of the well-known disinfecting properties of light.

Various species of microbes have been examined to ascertain their power of resistance to the sun's rays. For instance, Koch has shown that the germ of consumption can withstand the solar rays for only a short time. Cholera germs are easily rendered inert under the influence of direct sunlight, and other germs are susceptible in varying degrees, to the same influence.

Experiments have been made upon fabrics and manufactured articles of household use, like furniture, by first impregnating them with germs and afterward exposing them to the direct action of the sunlight. It is found that while the sun's rays have a distinct action upon the upper layers of stuff, the disinfecting process is somewhat retarded in the lower or deeper layers. Objects of a dark color are but little affected.

Investigators report that direct solar light kills in from one to two hours any germs of typhoid fever which may be present in water. Even diffused light exerts an appreciable effect in purifying water. In fairly clear water the effect has been known to be exerted at a depth of more than six feet.

In bodies of water exposed to the rays of the sun a minimum of germs is found in the early evening and night hours, and as might have been expected, a maximum of the same germs is found in the early part of the day.

A study of the action of artificial light upon disease has revealed the fact that nearly every germ develops in some one or two particular rays of the spectrum. For instance, typhoid germs multiply rapidly in orange, deep red, or deep violet rays, while they cease to develop in green, blue, or pale violet rays.

This corresponds in some degree to facts elicited by a study of the action of artificial light upon plant-life in general, of which latter facts growers have taken advantage to produce wonderful results.

Of all forms of artificial light the arc electric seems to promise greatest results to the experimenters on this interesting subject, but it is probable that nothing can equal the direct rays of the sun itself.

That the sun does exert an important influence as a disinfectant—and this not merely because of its warmth or drying power—is not to be disputed.

Do Not Smother Them.

Young mothers especially seem to think that babies' lives can be snuffed out, as a candle, by the least puff of wind, hence commence early to wrap and bind the poor little thing in a way little less than criminal. That babies are smothered to death is an every day occurrence, but the wonder is that not many more are killed by wrapping their heads up in thick shawls or blankets, which gradually come in contact with their lips, close their mouth and nose and when the little one is next looked at, attention being attracted by his prolonged silence, baby is limp and blue—the spark of life literally smothered out. This fearful sacrifice is not necessary, certainly greatly mourned when it occurs, but it is another of the many calamities due to thoughtlessness, nothing less. Let the child breathe, admit sufficient air to his mouth and nose, see that nothing comes in contact with his lips, neither shawl nor veil, that his breathing be absolutely free. Babies have died at the breast, pressed against it to nurse, and so suffocated.

Those having charge of infants and very young children should think what they do; it will save vain lamenting after the evil is done.

Care of an Abscess.

Abscesses of the ear are painful and dangerous. They are painful in the extreme when they occur in parturition, surrounded by bone because of the swelling caused by inflammation, and consequent pressure. As soon as it is known that abscesses are forming, the ear should be poulticed persistently with hot flaxseed-meal poultices, to bring the abscesses to a head and cause them to discharge through the outer ear. This course keeps the abscess localized. A small fly blister, about as large as the first joint of one's thumb, placed behind each ear, is helpful where the swelling seems obstinate. Warm opium and lead wash is helpful to syringe the ear with twice a day. Where the abscess is visible, and shows no appearance of breaking, though ready to, it should be opened by a careful hand with a clean needle-point to let the matter out. After syringing with the lead wash saturate cotton with olive oil and keep it in the ear.

To Prevent Insomnia.

The constant sufferer from wakefulness should make a study of herself and endeavor to ascertain what set of circumstances is most likely to provoke insomnia. Thinkers and students are often unable to sleep if they have worked steadily just before retiring, while a brisk walk in the open air, or a half hour's relaxation over a novel or a paper, will dispose them to slumber. There are those who find a hot bath at bedtime exciting, while it soothes others. The same may be said of calisthenics or any form of bodily exercise. A glass of hot milk and a biscuit taken just before stepping into bed often encourage drowsiness.

WINTER SMILES.

She—"I think I will do the cooking myself awhile." He—"H'm! That was what you wanted me to take out more life insurance for, was it?"

"What is a kiss?" her lover sighed.

"Grammatically defined 'tis a conjunction," she replied, "and cannot be declined."

"Did you find that he was a relation?" "Oh, yes—unmistakably."

"How was that?" "He borrowed \$1 from me almost before I had introduced myself."

Maude—"You wouldn't know my beau now if you met him." Nell—"Why, has he changed so much as that?" Maude—"That isn't it exactly. I've changed him."

Zigsby—"I have put a friend of mine on his feet three times in the last two years." Perksby—"That's nothing. I put a friend of mine on his feet fourteen times last night."

Customer (in restaurant)—"I've forgotten what I wanted to order, and I had it right on the tip of my tongue." Waiter—"What did you say about a tip, sir?"

"It's my ambition to be a millionaire," said Fakely. "I've made the one and now I am after the zeros." "Well, go on in your own way," retorted Cynicus. "You'll make 'em."

"Have you seen that portrait of Miss Dawkins by Marulous Boran? It looks just like an old master." "Do you think so? I thought it looked more like an old maid."

He—"When you are asked to sing and don't wish to, you always have such a convenient cold. Where do you get them?" She—"Oh, they're kept 'on draught' all over town."

Oh, "busy bee" exclaimed so, "We'd work like you, we vow, if we could loaf six months or so. As you are loafing now."

"Doctor, I want a tooth pulled. I'm a great coward when it comes to enduring pain, and yet I'm afraid of both laughing gas and chloroform." "You might be happy with ether."

Dealer—"This violin, madam, is a Stradivarius. It is nearly 200 years old." Mrs. Newrich—"You don't suppose I would take that? I can afford the latest style, let me tell you."

May—"They tell me your engagement with Charley Grumpleigh is broken. How did it happen?" Carrie—"It is no great mystery. The fact is, he was too fresh to keep; that's all."

Yeast—"Men turn somersaults on horse-back; I suppose before long we'll see them doing it on the bicycle." Crimsonbeak—"Why, man alive! that was the first thing I did on a wheel."

"How did you get Borely out of your whist club—did you ask him to resign?" "No; we didn't like to do that; but we all resigned except Borely, and then we all got together and formed a new club."

"Ah," exclaimed the cannibal chief, smacking his lips, "what kind of a minister was that we had for dinner?" "Your excellency," replied his companion. "I should say he was a prime minister."

"Remember that politeness always pays, my boy," said the benevolent old gentleman to the bootblack. "Mebbe," replied the practical boy, "but I'd rather have a nickel than a 'thank ye' for blacking shoes."

Mr. Crusher—"You don't think the young man you are engaged to will be jealous of me, because I am paying you attention, do you?" Miss Daisy—(after looking him over deliberately)—"No, I don't think there is any danger that he will."

She—"No, Ned, it wouldn't be judicious for us to marry until after you have had your salary increased. He (pleadingly)—"But two can live cheaper than one, you know, Nellie." She—"Yes, I know, that's what people say." As a matter of fact, they have to.

GOLD AND DIAMOND THIEVES.

In South Africa They Are One of the Plagues of the Country.

The gold and diamonds of South Africa have already attracted a very fair proportion of the thieves of the world to that favored region. Some very fine hauls have been made, and others all but made; but one hears little of such things over here; there is so much of solidly interesting South African news that the cables seldom give us the picturesque. Decidedly the most sensational attempt was one a few years ago on the diamond train. To reach Cape Town from Kimberly used to take three days, of at least two days and three nights. The diamonds used to be carried in a safe in the post office sorting van. Some expert thieves found out where the safe always stood in the van, and under that spot, beneath the bottom of the van, rigged up a platform of rope and plank, whereon a man could lie and work with a drill as the train sped on its way. It is a lonely journey, with hours and hours between stations. The thief endured his uncomfortable position beneath the moving train long enough to bore a circle of holes in the bottom of the iron safe, having first cut a piece out of the bottom of the van. His plan was to complete the circle in this tedious way so as to remove a piece of the safe bottom and leave a hole large enough for the insertion of an arm, the removal of a bag, and the capture of a fortune in diamonds. Unfortunately for him, he was either disturbed, or he got tired, or he dropped off his planks. At any rate, he did not cut out the piece of metal, consequently did not reap his glittering reward. He escaped. The post office people in the van heard nothing of the drill—which probably was silent save when there was the clatter racket of the wheels to drown its noise. When the platform and the pierced safe were discovered the thief had gone and left no clew beyond his handiwork, which never proved sufficient for tracing him.

Items of Interest.

A London hair-dresser asserts that the best hair-producer is onion juice. Warm milk, applied as a wash three or four times a day, is a wonderful beautifier of the complexion.

Tea was cultivated in China 2,700 years before the Christian era, and in that country it was first used as a beverage.

A bicycle that in five minutes can be taken apart and packed in a valise 24x16 inches, has been invented by an ingenious Frenchman.

Mrs. Burt Johnson, of Franklin, Ind., is only fourteen years old; yet she has been two years a wife, and is now the mother of a lively little daughter.

The slaughter of deer, just for their horns, is so great in the vicinity of Michigan, Mich., that venison can be bought there for two cents a pound.

A middle-aged woman in Old Orchard, Me., is a house-painter. She paints houses, barns, fences, etc., for a living, and gets the same pay as the regular tradesmen.

The village of Mount Healthy, Ohio, has just been incorporated, and it has converted the old Free Church into a jail. The village is evidently preparing for emergencies.

The Shopping Mystery.

Mrs. Bargain—Why don't you charge a dollar for these goods instead of 99 cents?

Salesman—Why, ma'am, you're always sure to think of something else you want while waiting for your change.

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