

A Midnight Visitor

I.
"There are more terrors at sea than shipwreck and fire, more frights and horrors, mateys, than famine, blindness, and cholera," said the old seaman, with a slow motion of his eyes round upon the little company of sailors. "I remember once being aboard a ship in the Indian Ocean. There was ne'er a moon that night. The ship rose faint and hushed to the stars. It was one bell in the morning watch. Scarce air enough moved to give life to the topmast canvas. As the ship bowed upon the light swell the sails swung in and swung out with a rush sound of many wings up in the gloom. Yet the vessel had steered way in that hour. Shall I tell you why? Because I know!"

The grey-haired, respectable seaman closed his eyes in silence, filled with significance, and after a short smoke, thus proceeded:
"Some of the watch on deck sprawled about in the shadow out of sight, curled up, asleep. Only one figure was upright forward. 'Twas the shape of the man on the look-out."

"This man thus standing, by no means asleep, yet with his head sunk and no doubt his eyes closed, was suddenly struck on the side of the face by something hairy, damp, and cold. He sprang into the air as though he had been shot through the heart. Oh, heavens! What was it? A naked figure, shaggy as Peter Sarrano, wild with hair, furious with a grin, terrible with the red gleams of the starlight flung upon his little eyes. The sailor shrieked like a midnight cat, and fell in a heap down upon the deck in a fit.

"The ship was in commotion in an instant. Such a yell as that was worse than the smell of fire.

"What's the matter?" roared the mate.

"Here's Kennedy in a fit, sir," sung out a voice.

"Is that all?" said the mate. And he went forward to look at the man.

"It's a fit, certainly," said he. "Give him air, lads. Get a drink of cold water into his mouth. It's epilepsy."

"When the mate was told the man had his senses and was sitting up, he went forward again and questioned him. He was sitting on the foot of a cathead, and was too weak to rise when the mate stood before him.

"What is this you're rambling about?" said the officer. "Aren't you quite well yet?"

"Blow me, then, it slapped me fair over the chops, like flicking yer with the wet sleeve of a jacket. He rose four foot when I swooned. He might ha' been more an' he might ha' been less. Darkness put him out—only that I recollect," said the man, turning up his pale face to the stars, "taking notice of a couple of eyes like red lights floating in water, and a grin of teeth wide as the keys of a pianey."

"He's mad," thought the man, who stepped, nevertheless, into the bows and looked over. Nothing was to be seen. He surveyed the ocean by the light of the stars, and glanced along the deck and up aloft, then told the look-out man to go below and turn in, and went aft, reckoning the thing an epileptic's nightmare.

"Just then a catspaw blew. It was so faint that it scarcely chilled the moistened forefinger of the officer it had to be reckoned with, nevertheless. It was an air of wind, anyhow, and someone sung out that the ship was aback forward, on which the mate went to the break of the poop, and yelled to the seamen to trim sail. Something went wrong in swinging the yards on the fore.

"Jump aloft, a hand, and clear it."

"A seaman went up the rigging; his shadowy shape vanished in the gloom that blackened like a thundercloud upon the foretop.

"Suddenly, when midway the rigging, he yelled at the top of his voice. His cry was more dismal and heartshaking than even that with which the man Kennedy had terrified the ship. He caught hold of a backstay, and sank to the bulwark-rail as though handsomely lowered away in a bowline.

"By Jingo!" he roared, flinging down his cap, whilst those who peered close saw that he trembled violently; "der toyfol is on board dis ship! I have seen her mit mine eyes! If I hav not seen her, den I was a nightmare, and she was mad! Look up dar!"

"He obtained no answer. The seamen, attending the indication of the Dutchman, were to a man gazing aloft with hanging chins; for on high up in the crossstrees, a visible bulk of shadow, there sat, squatted, hung—what?"

"What's wrong aloft forrad there?" bawled the mate. And now he sung out with energy and decision, for the figure of the captain was alongside of him.

"There's something aloft that looks like a man! howled a seaman—one of the upstaring crowd about the Dutchman. 'Come foward, sir; you'll see him.'

"The mate and the captain went forward and looked up.

"It is a man!" exclaimed the captain. "Aloft there! What are you do-

ing skylarking up in those crossstrees? Come down!" he cried angrily.

"You sick-hearts, what d'ye see to stare at? Or seeing, why don't you go for it?" thundered the mate, after a pause, during which the figure on high had made no answer or motion. And as he spoke the words the officer bounded on to the bulwarks, and ran up the fore-shrouds.

"He travelled with heroic speed till he got as high as the foretop. There he stood at gaze. Presently, after you might have counted fifty, putting his foot into the topmast rigging, he began to crawl, with frequent breathless stops; his passage up those shrouds had the dying uncertainty of the tread of a bluebottle when it climbs a sheet of glass in October.

"On a sudden he came down into the top very fast. There he stood staring aloft as though fascinated or electrified; then, putting his foot over the top, he got into the fore-shrouds, and trotted down on deck, all very quick. The captain stood near the main hatch, looking up. The mate approached him, and in a whisper of awe and terror, exclaimed, whilst his eyes sought the shadow up in the foretopmast crossstrees: 'I believe the Dutchman's right, sir, and that we've been boarded by the devil himself.'

"What are yer talking about?" "I never saw the like of such a thing!" said the mate, in shaking tones.

"Is it a man?" said the captain, staring up with amazement, whilst the seamen came hustling close in a sneaking way to listen, and the Dutchman drew close to the mate.

"It has the looks of a man," said the mate; "yet it sha'n't be murder if you kill him."

"She vos no man, sir. I vos close. I vent closer den you. I expect, sir," said the Dutchman, "she's an imp. Strange dot I did not see him till I was upon her."

II.
"The captain went swiftly to his cabin for a binocular glass. The lenses helped him to determine the motionless shadow in the crossstrees, and he clearly distinguished an apparently large human shape, but in what fashion, or whether or not he had come into the ship?"

The captain went on to the poop and searched the silent sea with the glass with some fancy of finding a boat within reach of his vision. Nothing was to be seen.

"It got wind in the fore-castle that something wild, unearthly, hellish, was aloft, and the watch below turned out, too restless to sleep, and all through those hours of darkness the sailors walked the decks in groups.

"Why don't the captain let me shoot him?" said the second mate at four o'clock. "I cannot miss that mark."

"No," said the chief mate. "I've talked of trying what shooting will do. The captain means to wait for sunlight. But how did it get on board?" said he, inking his voice in awe. "There's no land for hundreds of leagues."

"It was not long before day whitened the east. And then, and even then, what was it? There it sat up in the crossstrees—a hairy, sulky bulk of man or beast, black; and the creature looked hard down, whilst all hands were staring hard up.

"Seized, if it isn't a gorilla!" said the mate.

"No," said the captain, letting fall his binocular. "Look for yourself. Yet it's not a man, either."

He burst into a laugh, as though for relief. "It's a huge hairy baboon, one of the biggest I ever saw in my life. He'll be as fierce as a mutinous crew, and strong as a frigate's complement. What's to be done with him?"

"How in Egypt did he come on board?" said the mate, viewing the beast through the glass.

"By that, maybe, sir," exclaimed the second mate, pointing to some object floating flat and yellow, faint and far out upon the starboard quarter.

"The captain levelled the ship's telescope. 'A large raft,' he exclaimed, after some minutes of silent examination. 'May be.'

"The captain said: 'The beast don't seem faint, but I guess he's thirsty, and he may fall mad, come down, and bite some of us. So,' says he to the chief officer, 'send a hand aloft with a bucket of water for the poor brute and a pocketful of ship's bread. If we can civilise him, so much the better.'

"But it never came to it, for he refused to come on deck. He bared his teeth, and his eyes shone with malice of hell if the men attempted to approach him. It was impossible to let him rest aloft throughout the night to command the ship, so to speak; for he might sink to the deck stealthily as the shadow of a cloud blown by the wind; and he was strong enough and big enough to tear a sleeping man's throat out.

"He must be shot," said the captain. And he told the second mate to fetch his rifle.

"The second mate, that he might make sure of his aim, went aloft into the foretop. The beast was then sitting on the topgallant yard. He had been in command of the fabric of the fore all day. Had it come on to blow so as to oblige the captain to shorten sail, the deuce a seaman durst have gone aloft to stow the canvas. The second mate, standing in the top, was in the act of lifting his rifle, when the monster, running on all fours out to the dizzy topgallant yardarm, stood erect a breathless instant, poised—in human posture—a marvellous picture of the

man-beast against the liquid blue, then sprang into the air.

"Come down," roared the captain to the second mate, "and shoot him through the head, for God's sake!"

"As the beast rose with a wild grin after having been so long out of sight through the frightful height he had jumped from—you'd have thought he'd have risen with a burst skin—the captain bawled out, 'Blessed if he's not making for his raft!'

"The baboon, with a fixed expression, and with eyes askew upon the ship as he drove past, swimming very finely with long, easy flourishes of his arms and dexterous thrusts of his legs, whilst the end of his tail stood up astern of him as though it was some comical little man there steering—the baboon, I say, was undoubtedly, and with amazing sagacity, making straight for the raft, having taken its bearings when aloft; but at the moment the second mate knelt to level his piece, meaning to murder the poor brute out of pure mercy, the thing uttered—oh, heavens! what a horrible cry!—and vanished, and a quantity of blood rose and dyed a black patch upon the calm blue. No more was seen of the baboon, but a little later the back scythe-like fins of three sharks showed in the spot where he had disappeared."—London Answers.

PERSONAL POINTERS.

Interesting Gossip About Some Prominent People.

Dr. Joachim as a lad of thirteen played the violin at a Philharmonic Society concert in London sixty years ago, and he will this year again perform in London in connection with the celebration of his diamond jubilee.

The Hon. A. G. McGregor, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council of Australia, is the oldest member of the Ministry, being nearly sixty years of age. He was originally a laborer on a South Australian sheep farm, and lost his sight through an accident while chopping wood. He is blind and has to be led everywhere. Mr. McGregor has a marvellous memory, is a wonderfully good debater, and enjoys the respect of members of all parties.

Lord Edward Churchill is an interesting man, with a quite unusual variety of occupations and attainments. He is an expert at mechanics and electric science. He has built a church organ and made a brass model of an eighty-one ton gun. He also constructed electric dynamos for Queensmead, where he resides, and "wired" the house throughout. Microscopic research also attracts him, and he gives much time to astronomical studies.

Many people have wondered why the Empress Eugenie always carries about with her, wherever she goes, a little wicker basket, and many speculations have been made as to its contents. The basket is lined with cotton-wool, and in that soft substance nestles a hedgehog! It is the Empress's only pet, and she would not dream of allowing it to be attended by anyone but herself. She has rather a superstitious attachment to the curious creature, and believes that it has a talismanic power of ensuring her safety and general well-being.

Lord Masham must be reckoned among the great inventors of his time. Three new industries he has created at least—that of machine wool-combing, the power-loom velvet and plush weaving, and that of the utilization of waste silk. In working out the machinery for these industries he spent, as he loves to relate, over \$3,000,000. To-day he reaps his reward in a colossal income. The story of Lord Masham's career is one of the romances of industry. In his time he has taken out over 100 patents, and all in connection with silk and wool manufacture.

Alton B. Parker, who is to be Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States, was born on a farm four miles from Cortland, New York, on May 14th, 1852. He was successively school-teacher, lawyer, judge, and, finally, Chief Justice. His mother, who is now nearly eighty, has been talking of her son. "I do not know whether Alton is likely to be President or not," she said. "I began to use the switch on Alton when he was very young, and I attribute much of his goodness as a boy and his success as a man to those early corrective measures."

Mr. George Lansell, the gold king of Bendigo, who has been repeatedly urged to become one of the members for that Australian golden city in Parliament, has invariably declined. He has just given the reason to an interviewer. "My father threw himself heart and soul into the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, neglected his business, and was ruined. It was such a lesson to me that I have carefully avoided politics ever since." Mr. Lansell was born in Margate, England, eighty-two years ago, but Bendigo has been his home for half a century. He is the sole proprietor of several of the most productive gold mines, and a large shareholder in others. His Bendigo mansion "Fortuna," with its valuable pictures, statuary, and delightful gardens, is one of the most luxurious places in the Commonwealth.

SAME LINE.

"I wonder what has become of Goodley? When he was at school, you remember, he used to talk so much about uplifting mankind. Entered the ministry, perhaps?" "Oh, no. He's manufacturing explosive shells and torpedoes."

CHINESE BUSINESS WAYS

THEIR WORD IS AS GOOD AS THEIR BOND.

Keen Sense of Justice and Conscientious Objections to Progress.

The Chinaman is a complex problem, and it is not within the scope of the European to do justice to any one side of his character; but we are perhaps—those of us who live in the East—better able to appreciate his business capabilities; for the reason that it is in this capacity that we most nearly come into touch with him.

Successful training is the aim and ambition of the middle class Chinaman, and he devotes himself to this end with an energy of which few Europeans, with their many other interests in life, are capable.

The greater part of my life having been spent in the north of China, says H. Fulford Bush in the Shanghai Times, it must be understood that my remarks bear upon the northern native merchant, who is a more phlegmatic and cautious man than his southern brother and the more typically Chinese, in that he is less familiar with foreigners and their ways.

The strong gambling instinct inherent in every Chinaman prompts him to a boldness in trade speculations which foreigners do not care to emulate, and which—uncombined with that intimate knowledge of past transactions and apparent intuitive forecast of conditions governing prices, exchange, northern and southern demand and supply possessed by every native trader—would inevitably lead to disaster. The Chinese merchant, however, going on the broad principle, which experience of years has justified, that continuous intelligent trading in the staple exports and imports will yield a return of five years' profit as against two years' loss, enters into forward contracts, purchases in large quantities and stakes the greater part of

HIS CAPITAL AND CREDIT

on the correctness of his estimate of the present, vis-a-vis the future, market, winning five times out of seven and waxing prosperous on the fruits of his bold reliance upon his business perspicacity.

The foreigner cannot hope to compete with the Chinaman in his own lines without adopting methods which to the Western mind appear unpractical and opposed to all business precedent. The native does not trouble about bank guarantees, delivery of goods against documents and accepted drafts, elaborate book-keeping and fixed hours.

Dealing largely on the barter system, he delivers imports against exports, each firm making a memorandum of the transaction in a rough day book, without any bank intervention; and every merchant is prepared to do business at any time in the twenty-four hours, at his home, his hong (business residence), the tea shop, opium house, theatre or public bath. There is no sign of "rush"—why rush when you have the whole day, and if necessary the whole night, for deliberation and conclave before determining your line of action? And yet, when an opportunity offers such as a sudden fall in the prices of produce, or exchange, or freight rates, the native merchant can make up his mind and act as promptly and withal as calmly as the smartest Westerner could wish.

Though extremely conservative and opposed to any innovation, the Northern Chinaman is beginning to adopt such Western improvements as recommend themselves to his sense by reason of their money-saving qualifications—and the last few years have witnessed great changes in the bean cake factory machinery—which is now constructed in Hong Kong on a semi-foreign plan—improving the output of oil and allowing of a reduction in the labor

HUMAN AND ANIMAL

employed, as compared with the old process. There is still vast room for improvement in this direction; but, though fearless to a degree when embarking upon enterprises purely Chinese in their nature and working, the Celestial is timorously cautious in the matter of striking out a new line in which the assistance of foreign methods is a necessity. It is precisely this seemingly contradictory trait in his character which baffles the majority of Westerners, who endeavor by their rhetorical efforts to over persuade the possible purchaser, whose hesitancy is due as much to their only too apparent eagerness as to the dictates of his conservative and superstitious mind, which looks upon all things foreign as partaking of the nature of the evil one.

The traveller lies under a heavy handicap in North China, where the English-speaking Chinaman is a rare avis; and the employment of an interpreter is merely an additional handicap in that the Chinaman has a hearty, if unreasonable, contempt for those unacquainted with his language. Good and trustworthy interpreters are almost impossible to get, the average interpreter's rendering of the loquacious foreigner's dissertation showing up the weak points of his argument and entirely omitting his eloquence.

Propos of interpreters and their unreliability while present at a big official reception in the north of China given by a native Viceroy I overheard the interpreter appointed to the principal foreign guest convey to the Viceroy the said guest's complimentary remarks upon the ex-

cellence of the entertainment provided by the host, prefacing his interpretation by the words "T'a Shuo" (he says). He would thus have quoted the remark of a coolie, a man of no class distinction. The use of the pronoun was absolutely inexcusable but the foreigner did not understand Chinese, and the Viceroy who should have

RESENTED THE INSULT

to his guest passed it over as being doubtless good enough for a non-Chinese-speaking foreigner.

In no country in the world is etiquette more rigidly observed and held in honor than in China, but the foreigner is a walkojoen (a man from without, in slang parlance, an outsider), and as such not entitled, unless acquainted with the language and etiquette, to any great consideration.

This may be a somewhat extreme instance, but it serves to demonstrate a fact which foreigners' desirous of doing business in the country cannot afford to ignore, viz., that the average Chinaman, whether official or merchant, considers himself superior to the European, and that the latter must therefore be careful to acquaint himself with the language and manners of the people. With such knowledge, he will find that he can cause an entire change of sentiment in his individual case, and put through matters of moment with an ease which is conspicuously lacking when an interpreter is necessary. But it must not be inferred that any over-discourtesy will be shown to the European who is ignorant in these essential matters; on the contrary, the impression he will receive will be that the Chinese merchants he has visited have been kindness and courtesy personified.

They will doubtless have plied him with tea, cigars and cigarettes, the while they have listened with an air of charmed interest to his imperfectly interpreted utterances; and he will take his departure convinced of their willingness, circumstances permit, to do business with him and his firm exclusively. He cannot, of course, be expected to realize the fact that the conversation between the merchant and interpreter, when the mutual exchange of compliments has been exhausted, has been confined principally to matters of local business interest.

THE EXCHANGE RATES

The resolution of promissory notes into hard sycee (silver), the probable cause of the detention of the bean craft up river, and its effect upon produce prices and so on.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Chinese merchant is his business integrity. Much has been written and said on this theme, and it is impossible to extol too highly the absolute reliance that can be placed upon the merchant's bond. The writer's father, Henry E. Bush, for over thirty years in constant touch with the merchants of North China, never experienced a bad debt in all his many business transactions with the various native Hong.

Dir Ewan Cameron of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, when speaking of his tenure of office in China, extending over many years, said he has never lost a cent through his native constituents. When it is considered that the said bank is the leading bank in China, and the one with which native as well as foreign merchants are the most anxious to do business, it will be admitted that no finer tribute could well be paid to the integrity of the native trader.

At the time of the Boxer outbreak the Russo-Chinese Bank at Newchwang had over 5,000,000 taels invested in the native city, and despite the business stagnation resulting from the disruption of the usual commerce conditions since that date, that money has all been accounted for.

The main cause of this admirable state of affairs is, in my opinion, the guild organization. Every merchant is a member of a guild, every tradesman has his guild, and what the guild ordains is faithfully carried out by each of its members.

No Chinese merchant can afford to lose caste, or "face," as he would express it. His "face" is literally his fortune. Were he to be engaged in any discreditable transaction, and be reported to his guild, he would lose "face," and with it credit, business standing and his entire clientele.

The Chinese merchant has a keen sense of justice, in spite of the fact that the Chinese official class is singularly deficient in that respect; and if the foreigner can but show that he has "li" (right) on his side he will find it an unfeeling argument, one to compel a body of Chinamen, for the sake of their "face" to decide in his favor, their sympathy with their fellow merchants notwithstanding.

TURKISH SULTAN'S WEALTH.

There is an amazing collection of jewels in the Sultan's treasury at Constantinople. The turban of all the Sultans since Mahomet II. are there, all glittering with rare and large gems of the purest water. There are also the Royal Throne of Persia, carried off by the Turks in 1514, and covered with more than 20,000 rubies, emeralds, and fine pearls, and the Throne of Suleiman I., from the dome of which there hangs over the head of the Caliph an emerald Gin, long and 4in. deep. These two thrones are the chief objects in the collection.

The real "harp that once through Tara's halls the soul of music shed" is in the museum of the Trinity College, Dublin.