Pages from Parson Parlett's Diary

January 8, 1667.—Forth to Brackminster, by appointment, to meet with the bishop, who hath given me the living of Sternax, newly vacated.

His lordship very courteous and did offer to lodge me that night. But I was anxious for Dorothy, she being all alone, and did think of it the more that 'tis now two years to that very day that her dear mother did leave me a widower, to my unceasing sorrow.

Yet the good bishop would have me, at the least, dine with him and did hasten the meal for my greater expedition. A good dinner of roast pullet and sucking pig, but I have drank better wine. I was not, I fear me, the good company I generally be

In Sternax parish, as my lord bishop did privily inform me, there be a man of strange life and behavior, albeit of good substance and position, one Sir Ralph Brant, whom Mr. Thorp, the former parson, now dead of the jaundice, did ever regard as a thorn in his flesh.

On my asking wherein he did more particularly offend, "Nay, that," quoth the bishop, "I cannot precisely tell. But Mr. Thorp did ever complain of him as a pagan man who did set a bad example to the parish, nor would accept his pastor's guidance in the matter of almsgiving. Yet I am bound to say that my nephew, who did meet with this same Sir Ralph in foreign parts ere he came into his inheritance at Sternax, ever spake loudly in his praise, as a most excellent good young man and a valiant. And 'twixt you and me, Mr. Parlett, your predecessor, though a worthy man and a pious, was wanting in discernment."

I was a little downcast at the thought of so contrary a parishioner, which the bishop perceiving did lay his hand kindly on my shoulder.

"Be of good cheer!" said he. "What though the man be an odd fish? 'Twill be for you to angle for him and draw him to land by virtue of your office!"

Thence, parting from the bishop with his blessing, to the White Hart Tavern, where I had bestowed my nag, and whence I did homeward wend me in company of Mr. Thrupton, of my parish, whom, being originally from Sternax way, I did cautiously sound as to Sir Ralph Brant.

"'Tis a man," quoth he, "I have never seen, but have heard strange things of would fill a book.

Whereupon he, being a merry man and of a pretty enough wit, did, to my great content, fall to beguile the way with talk of this Sir Ralph. I will briefly set down one or two things he did tell me.

Some three years ago, Sir Ralph being but newly come to Sternax, a couple of footpads, bold knaves, did stop several that journeyed that way, leaving them ever the poorer for the meeting. At length the rascals did wax so impudent as to strip a wealthy grazier to the skin and then truss him like a fowl to a stake passed under his bent thighs, and was found next morning under a hedge well-nigh perished with cold. Now Sir Ralph, when he heard it, did disguise him with a mock white beard, and bowing his shoulders did shape himself as an aged man, and leaning on a crutch did go that way of a moonlit night. Up to him the two ruffians and did jeer him, and were for treating him like the rest, when he out with a stout cudgel from under his cloak, and, being a marvellous strong man, did trounce them both and tie them back to back. And the end was they were lodged in Brackminster jail, where the grazier did swear to them and were both hanged.

Here be another tale. Sir Ralph did chance to be passing through Sternax village one day, when he heard words between a widow woman and her grown son. The mother was entreating her son to turn the dung-heap aside from her cowhouse door lest she should soil her skirts going to milk.

"And think ye I be going to soil my hands with the dirty work?" cried the sulky lout

Up steps Sir Ralph. "Yes, my man," quoth he quietly, "and not only so, but you'll wash the stones for a path for your mother when all is done."

Which the man did as meek as a lamb, under the shadow of Sir Ralph's sapling staff.

"And now for your pay," said Sir Ralph, with a queer smile, "follow me."

And the rustic followed him, not knowing what to think, till they got out of sight and ken of all men into the heart of Sternax Common, where Sir Ralph did baste him right heartily with his oaken stick.

"And now be off and be a good son to your mother, or there'll be another pay-day."

And from that day no saint could keep the fifth commandment better than did Toby Sikes.

At which hearing it did seem strange to me if Sir Ralph were not the best beloved man of that country-side.

"Nay," quoth Mr. Thrupton, "'tis not so. For he hath a strange twist of temper and consorteth but little with his fellowmen. Nor will he brook intrusion on his privacy and detesteth to see a stranger on his domain. As to womankind, he doth so abhor it (despite his goodness to the village widow) as he will have all his household work done by men, nor will even have a female wash his clothes, but the gardener must do it; slovenly, no doubt, but of that his master recketh little. There be rumors that, being once crossed in love, it hath soured the man. However this may be, he is, though young and comely and of a most distinguished presence, of so grim and stern a mien that men fear more than they love him."

"And is he sound for Church and king?"

Mr. Thrupton laughed right merrily. "Why, for aught I know, and so he may be! But he hath deserted Sternax Church since his quarrel with Parson Thorp a year ago last Martinmas. This was how it befell:—

"There was little love betwixt the two, and the parson had been reproaching him for laxity in churchgoing, being perchance secretly vexed that when he did come he ever fell asleep at the sermon. But one Lord's Day Sir Ralph did not slumber thereat, for the discourse was discharged full at his head. He heard himself likened to moody Saul vexed with an evil spirit, and hurling javelins of despite at the David of the pulpit who would fain have harped to him the soothing melody of true doctrine and sound advice. And all in so pointed a manner as to draw the stare of the congregation upon him. And Sir Ralph did sit on with folded arms like to a stone figure. But when the preacher went on to compare him with Nebuchadnezzar, driven for his sins to a lonely life far from the haunts of men and eating grass as oxen ('twas another craze of Sir Ralph's never to eat butcher's meat), up he got and was walking out of the church, holding himself mighty stiff and straight, when a fat and wheezy old dog of the parson's which was wont to lie on the steps of the pulpit did come to meet him, wagging its stump of a tail. The wrathful man did raise his foot in act to kick, but did of a sudden change his mind and did pat it on the back instead. Lord! how I should have loved to have seen it all!"

I could not help but join in Mr. Thrupton's merriment; yet was I inly grieved as well for Mr. Thorp as for Sir Ralph; good men both, yet blind to one another's virtues and seeing only one another's defects. That matter of the dog should have healed their feud.

January 9.—Did arrive home and found Dorothy, to my joy, in good health and of gay spirits, and did rally me on my good fare at the bishop's, which was better, she would have me note, than the Apostles'.

But I, too, was in pleasant mood, and made answer that they dined off fish fresh caught, which was a tit-bit Brackminster, being inland, knew nought of, whereat she did break into merry laughter, which was music to mine ears.

She be vastly handsome, my Dorothy, and light-hearted withal, as a thrush in the coppice on a summer's day.

April 10.—We are arrived at our new home and find the house but a sorry one. Yet is the garden marvellous pretty, with yew-tree hedges cunningly trimmed and many sunny nooks wherein to sit—a thing to which my predecessor was more given than most of his coat, being a sickly man and ever of a great languor in hot weather.

Dorothy and I be already drawing plots of alterations in the house which, methinks, will be for the better and, doubtless, more to my daughter's liking, Mr. Thorp having been unmarried, so that less did content him.

Nor will Dorothy have me forget mine own comfort, but hath herself devised a room for my books and to compose my discourses, which pleaseth me vastly. And she hath moreover planned for me a bowling alley in the garden.

April 12.—I have to-day seen, but from a distance only, Stark Hall, the abode of Sir Ralph Brant, who, I find, owneth the bulk of this and other parishes hereabout; a fine house, but of an appearance most forbidding for the neglect it shows.

April 29—'Tis strange how Sir Ralph comes not to church. It cannot be that he hath heard my sermons ill reported of, for the people, and notably the younger men, do flock to the church every Lord's Day. And Mr. Bullamy, the churchwarden, tells me 'twas but a thin congregation in Parson Thorp's time—the main old women and children, and for the most part sad, and sorry sermons.

But Sir Ralph I have not yet seen, nor hath he made me welcome.

Now my Lord Trusfit, in my last parish, was ever careful to do everything for my content, and was wont to show me great civility—vension twice a year and a runlet of his best wine every Christmas—so that Sir Ralph's coldness irketh the more.

Yet would I not judge him hastily. Perchance he be warped of some trouble beyond the common.

May 3.—Dorothy, God bless her! be growing into much favor in the parish by reason of her kind heart and winning ways, and is already known and loved of all my poor people. And in sooth the maid be a passing sweet maid and the apple of mine eye.

May15.—Am newly come from the village, where be tales that Sir Ralph is wont to set man-traps and such-like heathenish engines in his woods, which I be loth to credit and so be Dorothy.

June 15.—Since my last writing things so strange have befallen that, in the telling thereof, I deem them worthy of more fulness and precision than is my wont.

'Twas nine o'clock at night on May 19, when, after we had supped, a knock came at my door, that Farmer Thribble, of Hebbleston, was took of a sudden worse and would fain see me.

"Alack, poor soul!" cries Dorothy, "'tis he of whom I heard yesterday. Dame Powlett would have it he hath been ailing ever since his ague!"

And she did hasten to fetch me my warm cloak for fear of the night air. The messenger, a raw country lad, did guide me to the farm, which, being on the uttermost border of the parish, I had not hitherto visited.

(To Be Continued.)

ITALY'S GENTLE QUEEN.

Some time ago the Queen of Italy asked a little girl to knit her a pair of silk mittens for her birthday, giving her the money for the material. A pair of beautifully worked mittens arrived on the Queen's birthday. The little girl received in return another pair; one mitten contained lires, the other bonbons. Queen Marguerite inclosed a little note, saying: "Tell me, my dear child, which you like best." The reply ran as follows: "Dearest Queen—Your presents have made me shed many tears. Papa took the mittens with the money; my brother had the bonbons."

THE COCOS ISLAND GOLD.

AN EXPEDITION TO SEEK BURIED TREASURE IN THE PACIFIC.

Capt. Gould Knows Where a Famous Hoard Is Hidden and Has Persuaded Some Landlubbers to Advance the Money He Needs—A Cape Breton Man's Adventures.

For many years the Captains who sail the Pacific Ocean and the adventurous folk who go with them or listen to their tales ashore have talked and schemed and dreamed about the Cocos Island and its buried treasure. The men of the sea all know, and they have convinced many landlubbers, besides, that there is much treasure buried in Cocos Island. Many an expedition has been planned to go there in search of it, but it is one thing to plan an expedition to go in search of buried treasure and quite another to get up the next morning, and put hard-earned cash into the scheme. So the sea folk have talked, the land-lubbers with money have listened and believed, and the expeditions have scome to naught, and the treasure still waits in Cocos Island. But next week an expedition is really going to start from Victoria, B. C., in search of it, and is pledged not to return until the treasure is found, or every foot of ground on Cocos Island has been turned upside down.

The scheme has been directed by Capt. Gould, who has persuaded half a dozen men or more to put up $500 each into the expedition. He has chartered the schooner Aurora, and will take with him several other sea captains whose faith in the buried treasure of Cocos Island is as dauntless as his own. They have no doubt that they will be able to find it at once, because they have

CHARTS AND MAPS

of the island which show exactly where the treasure is buried and how to reach it—charts made by the only man who has ever been in the island and found the treasure.

He was a sea Captain from Cape Breton, who owned a little trading schooner, and ran along the coast of South America and Mexico. In one of his trips he heard of the treasure and after studying over the matter for a voyage or two, concluded that he was just the man to find it if anybody could. So the next time he left port he cleared ostensibly for a trading voyage, but as soon as he was out of sight of land turned the bow of his schooner toward the golden island of his dreams. And after he had sailed and sailed far down toward the equator, he found the golden island and the golden treasure, too. But he was a prudent man, was the Cape Breton sea Captain, and he knew that his little schooner was none too seaworthy. And he figured the matter out that if he took a little of the treasure he could go back to San Francisco, get a much better craft, and return for the rest of it. But if he took it all and his ship should happen to go to the bottom of the sea, that would be the end of the treasure. So he took on board only enough to carry out his scheme, and started for home.

And sure enough, so the tales of the sea folk all say, on the third night from Cocos Island there came a sudden storm so furious that the ship was driven far out of her course. And in the middle of the night he heard the roar of breakers and felt the crash of jagged rocks through the rotten hull of his little ship. All night long the storm raged and the waves rolled over the vessel as she pounded on the rocks. The next morning all on board had been drowned except the Captain and two others. The schooner had struck on the outlying rocks of a small island, from which the natives soon came out in small boats and took the Captain and his two comrades ashore.

THEY LOOTED EVERYTHING

the waves had left on the schooner and took from the men everything they possessed, even to their last stitch of clothing. The three were subjected to such brutal treatment that the two seamen died after a few weeks, and the Captain, in final desperation, stole a small boat one night and started alone out upon the Pacific Ocean. He put up a small sail and took advantage of what wind there was and he rowed for all his iron muscles were worth, and at the end of the second day he made a landing on a small uninhabited island, where he rested for a few days, replenished his tiny stock of water from a spring, and gathered some edible fruits and roots. Then, dauntless soul that he was, he took to the sea again in his small boat.

After ten days of thirst and hunger and blood-boiling heat and brain-withering solitude he was picked up by a sailing vessel bound for London. Down about the Horn that ship was wrecked, and the Cape Breton Captain a second time endured the horrors of the open sea in an open boat. But the survivors were picked up, and at last, by way of half a dozen ports, he reached his home in Cape Breton too much broken in both body and mind ever to tread the decks of a ship again.

The few remaining years of his life he spent in making maps and charts (most minute in their details and directions) of Cocos Island and its buried gold. Capt. Gould, who has been very friendly with him in former years went to see him one day a few years ago and had the whole story from the old man's lips and from his hand the maps and charts of the island. Capt. Gould engaged to do everything he could to find the treasure and to share with the wrecked Captain whatever was found. But bad luck befell him before he reached the Pacific coast, and he had neither money nor ship for the scheme. Since then he has been shipping as he could and doing his best to induce men with money to help him in his venture. He has at last succeeded, but the Cape Breton Captain died two months ago in his home and the Cocos Island gold is not for him. But whether or not Capt. Gould and the schooner Aurora find what they are going for, the expedition will at least settle the most widely believed tale of buried treasure that is talked about in all the regions washed by the Pacific Ocean.

AN ARABIAN WEDDING

The Sterner Sex Excluded from the House of the Bride—a Pretty and Interesting Event.

The following extract from the letter of a gir in Cairo describes an Arabian wedding which the writer was permitted to witness as one of a small party of favored guests:

At 8 o'clock in the morning our Aragonian, who, by the way, is a fascinating and picturesque fellow, well supplied with letters of recommendation from many famous people, met us at the door of our hotel with three enormous bouquets. Arriving at a very narrow street, we proceeded a short distance on foot under red rags, striped awnings, and lanterns which were stretched over our heads the length of the street. The round was sprinkled with sand, and along the sides of the houses were seats provided for the men, as none of the sterner sex were allowed in the room or house of the bride. We, the women mounted three flights of stairs, and found ourselves in a large room filled with Arabian women of various classes, also some Grecian and Turkish women. These were arrayed in many-colored garments, pink silk scarfs, gold embroidered jackets, blue plush and wool stuffs, combinations I cannot begin to describe. The women gathered around us and led us to the divan arranged for the bride, seating the oldest in the party in the middle, while the rest of us were given seats on either side. We remonstrated, but they assured us that the bride could sit upon a chair. We were great curiosities to them, apparently, and we certainly enjoyed the novelty of our position. In their simple way they showed us great hospitality. The approach of the bride was heralded by a most conglomerate lot of howling women and children, playing tomtoms, tambourines and native instruments anything but musical. We arose to resign our seats of honor in favor of the bride and her attendants, but she insisted that we two remain on either side of her, while she occupied the middle seat just vacated by one of the party, and so we sat through all the howling and banging, the pushing and jostling of these half-civilized creatures. After every one had seen the bride an enormous woman laden with jewelery and golden chains, began to howl and hammer on a tambourine, then the guests threw coin into the bride's cap while the women howled and made other hideous noises. After this the guests began to mingle with one another, and we found some who spoke a little English, some French and some Italian. Finally a very intelligent Greek woman took us in charge; she was quite a linguist, and we were enabled to appreciate what we had seen after her explanations. Then came the refreshments, and we had to eat little cakes and big cakes, all shapes and flavors, and last one awful affair of some kind soaked in wine. This was the end of the bride's part of the entertainment. We went down stairs to join the men of our party, and there met a very jolly old priest, who had been in London and Paris, spoke good French, and who interested us very much. He it was who was to perform the ceremony. The man we had not yet seen, but we were soon presented to him, with his attendants, who were parading up and down this inclosed street, preceded by an Egyptian band. We presented him with out two remaining bouquets, having left one with his 16-year-old bride. Again we all went upstairs, and saw the groom lift the veil of the bride, supposed to be the first sight of her fair countenance. This was the ninth and last day of this wedding performance, and the most important one, for they were at last duly tied by the old priest, and went home by morning light. It was a weird performance. Through it all they showed us, the only Europeans present, great respect, and in good English said they hoped we had had a pleasant time and were glad that we came.

On the following day, Friday, we were taken to see the famous Whirling Dervishes. Friday, one must bear in mind is the Mohammedan Sunday, and an eventful day. The court surrounding the arena in which this weird and uncanny performance takes place holds about 500 persons, and it was filled with all sorts and conditions of people. Americans and English, the predominating element. Soon after we entered the court the whirlers made their appearance, dressed in short white skirts and on their heads the funniest looking chimney pot hats. After marching around and around for fifteen or twenty minutes to the hideous noise of a band composed of tomtoms, tambourines and some wind instruments, they began to whirl, and they whirled until it seemed to us to whom the sight was new that we must cry out to them to cease. The sight was positively maddening. After fifteen minutes of constant whirling they dropped to the ground from sheer exhaustion, apparently. It appears, however, that this part of the programme is for effect entirely.

From this place we drove to hear the "Howlers," quite as famous as the "Whirlers," who were a horrid lot of healthy, lusty men, simply howling and making as much noise as possible in a most unpleasant manner which gave one the "creeps." One old fellow kept it up until he had hysterics and frothed at the mouth.

So much for the uncanny sights we saw this beautiful day in January with the sky as blue as turquoise and the air as balmy as June. Later in the day our dragoman took us to the Isle of Rhoda, near where Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter; then to Old Cairo, which is indeed quaint and deeply interesting to a Coptic church, which it is said, is built upon the spot where stood a shelter for the Virgin and Child while they were in Egypt.

A SHEATHING PROPELLER.

IT MAY BE VALUABLE FOR YACHTS AND OTHER SMALL CRAFT.

The Invention of a Yachtsman of Scotland—It May be Used at Will or Thrown Out of Action.

John Ferguson, of Scotland, vice-commodore of the Royal Forth Yacht Club, and owner of the famous cutter Petronilla, has invented a propeller which can be utilized to give the vessel speed through the water or be withdrawn within the hull at a moment's notice. The principle is such that the new invention is equally valuable to large and small craft, whether it fly the yacht club pennant or the company emblem that floats at the masthead of a transatlantic liner.

The one great difficulty with which the operation of the propeller has been confronted from its earliest day is that in sudden contract with a hard object, the result is likely to be a broken or twisted blade, and that means that the vessel must lie up for repairs until the propeller is in good condition. While such accidents cannot always be avoided it often happens that if it were possible to change the position of the propeller or withdraw it from the water, it could be saved from injury. This power is exactly that which Mr. Ferguson's inventions' posseses.
guson's invention possesses.

THE FIRST EXPERIMENTS

with the sheathing propeller, as it is called, were carried out on a fishing boat of about seven tons, yacht measurement. When not in use, the propeller is invisible, as it is housed in a tube fixed through the stern post of the vessel. A movement of an extending rod, or rather rods, brought about by the pulling of a lever in the engine room, brings the propeller in position outside of the boat. The blades are still feathered—that is, they are folded together. The pull of a second lever unfolds the blades and places them in position. Now let the lever that gives the propeller motion be pulled and the vessel will at once receive that impetus which forces her through the water.

Although it is true that the invention is adjustable to craft of any size, it is more particularly applicable to yachts and other vessels of comparatively small tonnage. Not only is the single propeller of this sort valuable, but so long as it is possible to withdraw it into the hull when not in use, propellers can be placed at almost any desired point. Again, it is not a necessity to operate these propellers by means of steam; electricity or oil of some sort may be utilized to equal advantage. This is one reason why the small craft would be benefited, for it would oftentimes do away with the big engine room force which the modern steam yacht requires, and permit the use in its stead of the more

DAINTY ELECTRICAL ENGINE

or that which find soil to be its agent in making the wheels go around.

A fact well known to all sailor men who have served aboard steam craft is that the slower a propeller moves, the more difficult the ship becomes to control. It sometimes happens that a vessel whose engines are not over and above powerful gets caught in the seas in such a way that her propeller becomes useless. She then loses steerage way and flops about in the trough of the sea and perhaps in the teeth of a gale becomes practically helpless. Mr. Ferguson's invention renders it possible for one of these propellers to be placed on each side of a boat, as well as at the stern. Equipped in this way, it would be difficult for a ship to take such a position that some one of the propellers could not be utilized.

There is no objection to the electrical engine. As the propeller may be operated by the latter as well as the former, it gives the owners of sailing yachts a chance to have all the benefits which result from proceeding under sail almost altogether and at the same time having sheathed in the hull, a propeller, that in case of a calm will enable the vessel to proceed without the loss of time which must otherwise follow. The propellers for small craft are only intended to promote a slow rate of speed, but this would be a great improvement upon the unpleasant and enforced idleness of a calm.

FINE HORSES.

Emperor William Has Two Pet Chargers a Bay and a Gray.

The stables of Emperor William of Germany contain many valuable blooded horses, but there are two which he prefers above the others. Both are worthy the fancy of any man, even a king. One is dark color, the other light, and both are splendid specimens of horseflesh.

Of the two, the Emperor selects the dark horse more frequently. He is a bay charger of good size—a deep, rich, bay, with a dash of white about the fore foot and still more of the same color above one hind foot.

The bay is a fine example of the ideal charger. His head and neck are particularly handsome. While full of spirit, he is docile and well-mannered. He is the possessor of high courage and shows his high breeding in every line and movement, while the carriage is so fine as to command the attention of all who see him.

A striking feature of the bay is the intelligence he displays. What has been said of many animals, "they can do everything but talk," comes near being true about the Emperor's favorite charger.

The gray charger is a finely-bred horse, also, with a magnificent head and neck. His manners are good, and he is of excellent disposition.

THE DEFECT IN HER ARMOR.

Strong-minded women now abound,
But where is she whose mental weight
Disdains the question, so profound,
Dear, is my bonnet really straight?