

THE BLACK SHADOW.

We were creeping well up to Cape Hatteras when the storm broke. The steamers had made all secure, and there was not even a shade of anxiety on the faces of the officers as they passed to and fro. The storm came with a howl of fury. Out of a clear afternoon sky the hurricane leaped like a hungry wild beast, and in a quarter of an hour the ocean was frothing and foaming and rushing upon itself like a mighty animal driven mad by awful torture. Half an hour after the first leap of the storm women had pale faces and set lips, and children were wailing. An hour later men trembled and looked hollow-eyed.

Fury let loose—the shrieks and screams of 10,000 devils—the howling of legions of fierce bulls! It was a grand, big ship, but she was a chip in that huge cauldron of froth, no more than a grain of sand in that roaring, screaming hurricane. She groaned and lamented at every surge; a thousand prisoners seemed beating at her hatches to escape as she lifted wearily over the great seas. Around her iron spars, through her wire rigging, over her and around her screamed the gale, and every breath of it which struck iron or wood sent out a hundred other shrieks.

In the long, wide cabin were gathered 150 people. They were awed—silenced—humbled. The children no longer wailed aloud. The women gasped and choked as families gathered together. Men may fear, but they do not weep. They may feel the terror, but they are dumb.

In the broad light of a June day—with the coast a thin line on the water—with a great world about us—with heaven's sun shining as brightly as man ever saw it shine—men, women and children felt the shadow of death creeping out from behind the sun—advancing with the fury—bubbling up from the depths of the treacherous sea. They felt it, and they drew nearer together. They felt it, and they prayed to God to spare them.

By and by there was a sudden shock. The great vessel lurched heavily, righted herself slowly, and next instant men were shouting in alarm. The shaft had broken. She was helpless.

You have read of the troughs of the sea—the great hollows between the waves. They are the graves of ships, dug by the hands of the howling gale—covered up by the hands of the calm. These graves are never marked. The waters of the sea cannot be written on. There are neither tombstones nor eulogies. In a day the grave has vanished—gone none but the waters can tell where.

And now the steamer's head fell off and we were presently rolling broadside to the hurricane. She was in the trough of the sea, and her grave had been dug. While some of the crew worked to get a drag over the quarter, others went to the boats. They had no heart. Terror was shriveling their courage as paper shrivels in the fire. Fury laughed derisively at the idea. Puny man fighting a hurricane blowing a hundred miles an hour! Mortal man striving to conquer an enraged ocean! No boat could live in the turmoil. No make-shift could bring that groaning, complaining steamer's head back to the wind. When they realized this all hope died out of their hearts. Men crowded together to die in company—some went away to be alone when the last moment came.

There were life-preservers. A few glanced at them and then at the sea. Mockery! A hunter with but a single shot thinking to save his life against the denizens of an Indian jungle! To be smothered in the angry foam—to be buried under tons of rushing water—to be flung about as a toy—strangled, drowned, bruised—swept out to sea a bloated corpse, to become food for sharks!

And now the end was nigh. The merciless waves were pounding at the steamer, breaking, bruising, sweeping away. Did men curse and women shriek? Did men pray and women weep? Did children moan in their awful fright? No! Not a voice was raised—not a murmur heard. Death was coming. The shadow of the terrible hand rested over the boat. There were no cowards, or all were cowards. At the last moment faces grew paler, lips were more tightly drawn, eyes had such a hunted, tortured expression that you felt to pity. Families drew apart from each other, hands were clasped, and there was only a moment to wait. As the steamer reached the crest of a wave she staggered, shook herself, and then fell over on her side. At the last instant, just as she turned, there was one awful chorus of shrieks and prayers and shouts for mercy. Even the howls of the hurricane could not drown that sound, but it was caught up and shattered and scattered, and next moment half a dozen strong men, battling with the desperation of despair for two or three minutes more of life, were the only remnants of the awful wrath. That black shadow had enveloped all the rest.

The Stars.

No more beautiful picture can be seen than the starlit sky presents on a cloudless night when there is no moon to dim the lustre of the stars. The heavens seem to be alive with these glittering points, sparkling like jewels. A few among them are large and brilliant, a greater number are of medium size; the rest, and by far the larger portion, are so small as to be barely visible.

Every star that twinkles in the sky is a sun, a great globe of fire, like our sun, but so far away that it looks like a mere golden point. The largest of the shining throned Sirius, the bright star that comes up in the southeast on winter nights. It is supposed to be two hundred times as large as our sun, but is so distant that it takes its light sixteen years to reach the earth.

If Sirius were suddenly destroyed it would be seen shining in the sky for sixteen years to come. Many stars are smaller than the sun, while our great sun himself, seen from the nearest star, is only a star of medium size.

It seems almost impossible to count the stars, but this has been done over and over again. The total number visible to the naked eye of an observer endowed with average visual power is less than six thousand.

So accurately has the estimate been made that it is asserted that twenty-four hundred and seventy eight stars are visible in the northern hemisphere and thirty-three hundred and seven in the southern hemisphere. A good opera-glass will bring out twenty thousand. A small telescope will show one hundred and fifty thousand. The most powerful telescopes will reveal more than one hundred millions.

Origin of the Gorge of the Mississippi.

The Falls of Niagara are familiar to all and came to exist through causes natural and easy of explanation, inasmuch as the whole secret lies in the character of the formations over which the river flows, viz., a crest made up of from sixty to one hundred feet of comparatively hard limestone lying in a nearly horizontal position, beneath which is a deep deposit of shales and sandstones. Whenever the river in wearing its channel back reached the point where this arrangement of rocks began, the hard limestone would naturally resist the erosive action of the waters, while the underlying shales and sandstones, offering less resistance, would be rapidly cut away, until a vertical fall such as is now seen would be the result, with a constant recession going on, leaving below the broad canon, walled on either hand by the limestone crowning them.

These few reflections as to the falls and gorge of Niagara, fully demonstrated by forces now in active operation, we shall apply to the Mississippi. Here also a mighty water-way has been cut out by erosion, a fact which is universally conceded, but no definite explanation of the process has heretofore, so far as we have been able to learn, been advanced. It remained for a geology-reading inventor by the name of Robert Bates to suggest a theory which, illuminated with what little investigation we have been able to give it promises to offer a solution of the question, or to assist in its solution. The theory briefly is, that the erosion was accomplished by means of a mighty cataract which began far down the river near its original mouth, and by gradual retrocession dug out the valley-like gorge which is so marked a feature in the upper part of its course, and left the high bluff walls on either hand, at the same time depositing heavy beds of sand at the bottom of the canon, the product of the erosion above, and that St. Anthony Falls are the ever decreasing and receding remnants of the once most stupendous cataract the world ever saw, having a perpendicular descent of perhaps six hundred feet.

How to see the Mountains on the Moon.

Of course, the first thing the observer will wish to see will be the mountains of the moon, for everybody has heard of them, and the most sluggish imagination is stirred by the thought that one can look off into the sky and behold "the eternal hills" of another planet as solid and substantial all our own. But the chances are that, if left to their own guidance, ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would choose exactly the wrong time to see these mountains. At any rate, this is my experience with people who have come to look at the moon through my telescope. Unless warned beforehand, they invariably wait until full moon when the flood of sunshine poured perpendicularly upon the face of our satellite conceals its rugged features as effectually as if a veil had been drawn over them. Begin your observations with the appearance of the narrow crescent of the new moon, and follow it as it gradually fills, and then you will see how beautifully the advancing line of lunar sunrise reveals the mountains over whose slopes and peaks it is climbing, by its ragged and sinuous outline. The observer must keep in mind the fact that he is looking straight down upon the tops of the lunar mountains. It is like a view from a balloon, only at a vastly greater height than any balloon has ever attained. Even with a powerful telescope the observer sees the moon at an apparent distance of several hundred miles, while with a field-glass magnifying six diameters, the moon appears as if forty thousand miles off. The apparent distance with Galileo's telescope was eight thousand miles. Recollect how when seen from a great height the rugosities of the earth's surface flatten out and disappear and then try to imagine how the highest mountains on the earth would look if you were suspended forty thousand miles above them, and you will, perhaps, rather wonder at the fact that the moon's mountains can be seen at all.

An End to English Coal in the Black Sea.

The new Russian Minister of Finance, Vishnigradsky, seems to be as ultra-protectionist as his predecessor, Bringe. Under his auspices a revision of the iron and coal duties has been taken in hand, of which one of the earliest results will be the complete suppression of the English coal trade with the Russian ports of the Black Sea. Twice during the last few years the tariff has been revised to check the influx of British coal; the measure now proposed, and sanctioned so far as the ministers are concerned, will extinguish the trade altogether. In place of coal from this country, south Russia will draw its supplies for the future from two sources—the Denetz region and the Transcaucasian deposits at Tkivibuli. The latter lie between Poti and Tiflis and have just been joined to the Transcaucasian Railway by a short but very costly branch line that has taken several years to construct. The coal of the Tkivibuli district is of excellent quality, lies close to the surface in great abundance, and is easily worked. Hitherto the only coal competing with the English at Odessa and other ports has been that from the Denetz region, which, having to be conveyed many hundred miles by railway to the coast, has never been able to successfully compete with the English article, in spite of a duty of five shillings a ton in its favor. The Transcaucasian supply, however, lies close to the coast, and it is estimated that the carriage from the mines to Odessa will be sufficiently low to enable it to successfully compete with English coal, even with the existing duty. However, to settle the question of foreign competition once and for all time, the Russian Government means to crush out the English fuel, and the rivalry will then lie between the coal from the Denetz and the coal from Transcaucasia.

A Rare Treat.

Not long there lived in the valley of Glenfruin, about three miles from Heleasburgh, an old lady who was celebrated for having a famous breed of turkeys. On one occasion she sold one of these to a gentleman called Brown. When cooked and served up at table it was found to be so tough as to be quite uneatable. Meeting the old woman a short time afterwards, Mr. Brown said to her: "What did you mean, Jean, by selling your turkey to me?" "What was wrong with it?" "It wasn't good at all," replied the gentleman. "No guid?" "No, Jean." "It was bound to be guid. It won the first prize for eleven years at 'Keeleneburgh Cattle Show.'"

Bull Fighting in Madrid.

The amphitheater is an immense place, round like the Roman Colosseum, and the ring is surrounded by "terraced granite," and crowded with galleries. Six bulls were doomed to die for our entertainment, but I only out-stayed the taking off of three of them. It was the last grand bull-fight of the season, and the audience was a brilliant one. The young King and Queen looked down from their box of state; old Isabella was there with her daughters; and adjacent boxes were occupied by lords and ladies of high degree.

The first bull was very meek. His sole desire seemed to be let alone. The picadores, or mounted spearmen, pricked him with their lances and he looked at them with an injured air, as if he would fain have said: "How can you? I am a well-intentioned bull, and I deserve nothing of this sort." One was divided between disgust at his want of spirit and indignation that a creature so harmless and kindly should be foredoomed to death. He waked up slightly when the banderilleros came in with their darts and their gay cloaks; but all through one felt that he was being butchered to make a Spanish holiday without all taking his own part, and even the matador, whose office it was to give him his death wound, performed his task a little scornfully, as if it were hardly worth the trouble.

The second bull was a different fellow altogether. As a young fellow on my left expressed it, he was "all there." He had a sullen, determined, desperate nature. He gored two horses to death, literally in an instant, just uplifting them and running them through with his mighty horns. He made sudden plunges at the banderilleros, and he pushed the great matador himself to the end of his resources; but at last he lay there dead, and the team of mules dragged him out of the arena. He was as black as an undertaker's horse; and he had been solemn and indignant and scornfully defiant all the way through.

The third bull was a little red one, as fiery and aggressive a creature as can possibly be imagined. He did not chance to hurt the horses, but he made swift plunges at the cloaked banderilleros, which it took all their skill to escape, and once he even leaped the barrier, and caused a precious consternation among the audience for a moment. This brilliant creature made hot work for the banderilleros, and held even the matador for a long time at bay, but at last he gamely died; the black mules dragging him away as they had done his brothers before him.

By this time I thought I knew enough about bull-fights, and I left the King and Queen and their court to behold the other three combats without me, and went away to walk on the Prado and reflect. My sympathies were all with the bulls. They were the only creatures who had no least show of fair play. They alone were doomed with absolute certainty from the start. Even the horses might escape; and at worst their torture was but for a moment. The men were only in just enough danger to make the thing exciting, and there were ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that they would escape scathless; but the bull, let him bear himself never so bravely, was to be made an end of.

The Discoverer of the Congo.

Eight years before Columbus discovered America an old Portuguese sailor named Diego Cam went cruising down the coast of West Africa until he came to a great river on whose south bank he set up a big white stone and carved an inscription upon it celebrating his discovery. It was the mighty Congo, and for many years the famous Pedra Padrao stood on the shore bearing silent witness to the old sailor's achievement. Years later when all eyes were turned to the new world, the Congo was almost forgotten and when it next attracted notice the Pedra Padrao had disappeared. The spot where it stood has for centuries been known as Padrao Point.

Three or four months ago Baron von Scherwin, the Swedish traveller, heard from some natives of a large fetiche stone hidden in the tall jungle grass at some distance from the beach. It was only after long palavers with the chiefs that he obtained permission to visit the revered object. He found, to his delight, the veritable Pedra Padrao, its well known inscription only partially effaced. This famous monument of a great discovery will doubtless be treasured hereafter as one of the most interesting relics of the early navigators.

By Rail to Europe.

The Russian project of building a railroad through Siberia to the shores of the Pacific may revive interest in Mr. Helper's "backbone" railway among the mountain chains on the American coast of the same ocean. Should these prospective lines meet at Behring Strait the time made by Phineas Fogg in his famous trip around the world may be shortened a good deal. The fervid imagination which has foretold even a "bridge" across the strait to connect these projected railways is much in advance of the age, but some sort of connecting journey could easily be imagined which, at the right season, might not have greater terrors than the trip across the British Channel. Thus the dream of many would-be travellers who long to see Paris or Rome without the risk of a week's seasickness could be realized. Still, so far as comfort goes a railroad journey through Alaska and Siberia would hardly be as attractive to most people as that by ocean steamer, and taking also the chances of detention a traveler intent only on going at top speed might often have cause to lament not taking Phineas Fogg's ocean routes instead after all.

What Jimmy Wanted to Know.

"If there is anything about the lesson you do not understand," said a Sunday-school teacher who had been explaining the crossing of the Red Sea, "just name it and I will endeavor to make the matter clear." "Jimmy Williams wants to ask a question," said Tobe Green. "Very good. What is it that you wish to know, Jimmy?" questioned the teacher suavely. "Where was Moses when the light went out?" sang out Jimmy in a squeaky voice.

Settled.

Little Johnny, to visitor: "I will tell you a secret if you won't tell. Sister Emily is engaged to Mr. Whyte. I heard mamma and Sis talking about it. The secret is that he doesn't know it himself yet."

Unintentionally Saucy.

Even the most disagreeable of minor incidents at sea have their use in promoting rapid acquaintance and good-fellowship. He is a truly polite and good-natured man who finds no "credit in being jolly" under all nautical circumstances, and amply deserves his hearty liking of his fellow-passenger. Says a passenger on board a ship just leaving Aden:

Outside the harbor there was a pretty stiff breeze and some swell. As the ship drew out to sea, she began to roll a little. Things promised to be lively, if the motion increased, bottles looked insecure on their bases, and plates began to slide.

Suddenly the ship gave a heavy roll, and I seized my plate and glass, one in each hand just in time to save them. All along the table crockery and glass gave way, emptying their contents into their owners' laps.

The lady on my left, who had been in the act of pouring sauce out of a bottle, feeling herself going back, abandoned her trencher, threw out her arms to save herself, and clutched at my shirt front with the hand that held the Worcestershire sauce bottle neck down.

I couldn't expostulate, and I couldn't let go my own dinner to remove the hand, so for the space of three rolls, that bottle was held hysterically against my bosom, until the last drop had run out.

There was a collecting of senses, and gathering together of fragments that remained. My neighbor recovered herself, and removed the now empty bottle, apologizing profusely, in the utmost confusion, while I protested that it was of no consequence whatever, quite unavoidable, an every day occurrence; it had often happened to me before, and I always liked it. All this with the horrible liquid trickling down my bosom.

"Well, I didn't think much of their essays," commented a much-bustled young lady, as she left a high school commencement, "but their dresses were quite as pretty as those seen on the stage last year."

A Pleasure Shared by Women Only.

Malherbe, the gifted French author, declared that of all things that man possesses, women alone take pleasure in being possessed. This seems generally true of the sweeter sex. Like the ivy plant, she longs for an object to cling to and love—to look to for protection. This being her prerogative, ought she not to be told that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the physical salvation of her sex? It banishes those distressing maladies that make her life a burden, curing all painful irregularities, uterine disorders, inflammation, and ulceration, prolapsus and kindred weaknesses. As a nerve, it cures nervous exhaustion, prostration, debility, and promotes refreshing sleep.

Lace pins of translucent enamel flower with centres of brilliants, are favorites with the fair ones.

When everything else fails, Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy cures.

Silver flasks are in great demand. Very small ones, capable of holding a gill, are carried by ladies.

"What Drug Will Scour These English Hens?"

Wicked Macbeth, who murdered good King Duncan, asked this question in his despair. Thousands of victims of disease are daily asking: "What will scour the impurities from my blood and bring me health?" Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery will do it. When the purple life-tide is sluggish, causing drowsiness, headache and loss of appetite, use this wonderful vitalizer, which never fails. It forces the liver into perfect action, drives out superfluous bile, brings the glow of health to the cheek and the natural sparkle to the eye. All druggists.

In lace pins the latest design is in the form of a twisted rope, the ends of which are tied with gold wires. Another represents a boom, with teetle-block and rope.

Whenever your Stomach or Bowels get out of order, causing Bilitousness, Dyspepsia, or Indigestion and their attendant evils, take at once a dose of Dr. Carron's Stomach Bitters. Best family medicine. All Druggists, 50 cents.

Said the poet as he offered his manuscript to the editor: "This is timely for the occasion and I think will fit." "Yes," said the editor as he eyed its dismal length, "surfeit."

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express and P. O.
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DR. T. S. BLOOM,
Branch Office, 37
Yonge St., Toronto.