

THE STORY OF THE "NISERO"

It is Told by One of the Survivors of the Wreck.

A story which may in some respects be compared with that of Robinson Crusoe himself is told in a little volume just published. It is entitled "The Wreck of the Nisero, and Our Captivity in Sumatra," and is written by W. Bradley, one of the survivors. Mr. Bradley, who was third engineer of the vessel, kept a diary of the sufferings and adventures of the shipwrecked crew during their detention in the island, and the tale is told from these daily records with a clearness of language, a sharpness of outline, and a fullness of detail which DeFoe himself has scarcely surpassed. The Nisero was an iron screw steamer of 1,818 tons, which set out from Liverpool in June, 1882, on a voyage to Penang. She was nearly wrecked by grounding on a sand-bank near the Twelve Apostles, seven days from Suez, but was got off, and reached Penang on July 22. From Penang the steamer went to Singapore, Batavia, and some other ports, and was then chartered by a Chinese merchant for three months to trade in rice. On Nov. 7 the crew were short of coal, and put about for Acheen head. On the next evening the vessel ran aground again, and became a wreck. The crew of eight and twenty men escaped with difficulty, and found themselves at Pongah, on the Sumatran coast, a hundred miles or so south of Acheen head, to which they had been directing their course.

The wrecked crew at once realized their position. The islanders were at war with the Dutch, and they would be taken for Dutchmen. The first natives they saw were evidently bent on plunder; but the cook, who was a Chinaman, was able to make himself understood, and explained that they were Englishmen. Presently an armed party appeared with a chief, who sent them a present of bananas as a token of good-will. In the morning the chief sent for them to the village, and gave them a poor hut, consisting of one small room, with a roof that let in the rain. He sent them a couple of rifles and some ammunition, but they felt that they were captives. Next day the rajah of Tenom came, and showed some suspicion that the fair-haired among them were Dutchmen. In a day or two he informed them that had they not been able to explain their nationality, not one of them would have been spared. He told them that some natives of the interior had on their knees besought him to massacre them. Under pretense of saving them he took them off to Tenom, leading them by a roundabout course, through frightful swamps, with an armed escort ahead, till they again reached the coast within sight of their starting place. The way then lay along the shore to the mouth of the Tenom river. Here they were put in another wooden house, better than that of the Pongah chief, but still incommodious and unhealthy. Tenom itself is a poor village of sixteen or eighteen huts, several of which are shops. Here they began to see the plunder of their own steamer gradually arriving and being appropriated by the natives. One day two steamers, evidently searching for something, came into sight at sea, and a few days later two peddlers appeared, one of whom slipped a couple of notes into the hands of one of the sailors, one from a Dutch captain, the other from a Dutch resident on the coast. The letters told them to be patient and discreet, as they were in the hands of a barbarian and a ruffian. On the same day letters were brought from a Dutch captain by a native of Acheen, giving the same counsel. Some stores were also sent which gave them two days of proper food. There was a letter to the rajah offering a ransom, but he was away at Pongah plundering the wreck. Next day he told the captives he would take them inland. They could do nothing but go as he bid them, though every step was further away from the chance of rescue.

The new quarters were a day's journey up the stream, or one of its affluents. They were close to the rajah's own house, and were in three huts. Here they spent Christmas, the Christmas dinner being rice and a little salt fish, with water to drink. The captain had meanwhile gone to assist in the negotiations, offering all the men as hostages for his return, but never returning. He sent them word that new demands had been made, and that he was going to Rigas in a Dutch gunboat to see what could be done. The New Year came with hopes of rescue, which soon vanished. The rajah told them he had passed his word to the government for their safety, but the Dutch had threatened to bombard Tenom, and he must take them further up the country. They heard the bombardment, as they were being hurried inland. One place of captivity was given them after another, and they spent their time in such sport as was permitted. On the 22nd of February a letter arrived from Commander Bickford, of the Pegasus, telling them of the efforts which were being made for their release, and especially of the presence on board of Mr Maxwell, who understood the Malay language, and was a favorite with the people. Still the weeks passed on and no rescue came. Stores arrived now and then, sometimes letters and newspapers, but no deliverance. On the 23rd of March an Italian sailor died, and there was much fever and dysentery among them. In the early summer unmistakable symptoms of cholera appeared, and three more men were dead before the end of May. Altogether seven out of twenty-eight who landed died and were buried together in a little cemetery, around which their surviving comrades made an ornamental fence, with a large cross in the middle of the ground, and smaller crosses at the head of every grave. Meanwhile they never seem to have been quite out of reach of friends.

From time to time stores were sent, sometimes letters, and their condition and treatment improved. The summer passed, and it was not till September that they actually set out on their way to freedom. As they went through Pongah the Nisero they had abandoned ten months before still lay on the shore, her masts standing, portions of the poop and fore-castle still showing, but her midships completely under water, and the shore strewn with the wreckage. On the morning of the 10th of September, they went on board the Pegasus, Mr. Maxwell, who had been the agent of their deliverance, following later in the day. It is clear from Mr. Bradley's narrative that the delay in their rescue was due to the vacillations and greed of the Acheen chiefs. The chiefs were not intentionally unkind to the captives, whose sufferings were due to the climate, the savage life they were compelled to share, and the privations they had to endure. The long period of endurance and suspense was lightened by many incidents of sport and curious observations and experience. In fifteen months from their first starting they had got home again, having in the meanwhile, as Mr. Bradley says in his concluding words, gained the sympathy of two nations and seen adventures enough to last a lifetime.—[London Times.]

The Great Wall of China.

This stupendous wall, which extends across the northern boundary of the Chinese Empire, and forms the barrier between China and Mongolia, is deservedly ranked among the grandest labours of art, and as one of the most remarkable of human structures, and is, perhaps, the most wonderful monument of human industry ever exhibited to the world. It was built during the reign of Tsin-Shee-Hwang-Te, the founder of the Tsin dynasty. It was commenced two hundred and fourteen years before the Christian era, and finished in about ten years, several millions of men working unremittingly in its construction. This wall is carried over the summits of high mountains, some of which are a mile in height, across deep valleys, and over wide rivers, by means of arches. In many parts it is doubled or trebled, to command important passes, and is built in the most substantial manner, especially toward its eastern extremity, where it extends by a massive levee into the sea, in which portion the workmen were required, under penalty of death, to fit the stones so exactly that even a nail could nowhere be inserted between the joints. In some parts, where less danger was apprehended, it is not equally strong, and toward the northwest consists of a wall two feet thick on each side of the structure, the lower part of which is composed of hewn stone, and the upper part of brick, the intermediate space being filled with earth, forming a very firm rampart.

The Chinese wall is fifteen hundred miles long, twenty-five feet high, and twenty feet thick at the top. Six horsemen can easily ride abreast on its summit. Towers are placed along its whole extent every one hundred yards, which was considered twice the distance an arrow could be shot, so that every part of the wall might be within reach of the archers stationed in the towers. These towers, or massive bastions, which are square, are forty-eight feet high and forty feet in width. The stone employed in the foundations, angles, and towers, is a strong, gray granite, but the upper part of the wall is made of bluish bricks and a remarkably pure and white mortar.

According to Sir George Staunton and Du Halde, this great barrier, which has been and will continue to be the wonder and admiration of ages, was constructed to protect China from the eruptions of the Tartars, 2,000 years ago.

It is estimated that the materials employed in this immense fortification would be sufficient to construct a wall six feet high and two feet thick twice around the world. It is certain that civilization had made considerable progress among the Chinese when it was only dawning on the nations of Europe, but their early history is shrouded in fable. Their earliest existing records are the writings of Confucius, who lived five hundred and fifty years before Christ, and from that period they descend in an unbroken series to the present day. Under their earliest dynasty they obtained such prosperity that the Mongols and Tartars invaded their territory for plunder, to prevent which they built the great wall which has ever been considered as a wonder in the world.

Wealth and the Pressure of Population.

Wealth is usually the accompaniment rather of a dense population than of a scanty one. Within the past half century the population of England has doubled, but its wealth has increased fourfold. Belgium, with a population of 485 to the square mile, is better off than Spain with but 90. To take an extreme instance. According to Scho-lcraft, an Indian hunter required for his sole subsistence seventy-eight square miles; his direct interest lay in the death of every rival who infringed on a territory which in England would support 30,000 people. The reason America can now support so many millions more of population is because these millions have brought with them the civilization which has been the result of competition in the old world. It is pressure of population which has raised man from savagery. It produced the diffusion of the race, forced man into the social state, and compelled each advance by one tribe to be followed by its rivals, or they would take a diminished chance of existence. The struggle for life, in which unfit varieties are eliminated, leaving the fitter ones to transmit their superiority to their offspring, has been the guarantee of development.

English in the House of Commons.

The language used in the House of Commons, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is exceptionally English, and the small part that foreign languages play in the construction of our ordinary speech is remarkable. Owing in a great measure to its monosyllabic character the Saxon is extremely forcible and impressive. Both from his natural genius, and from his long practice, Mr. Gladstone is undoubtedly the best orator in the House of Commons. A careful analysis of the derivation of the language employed by Mr. Gladstone in his speeches gives the following results: Seventy per cent. of the words Saxon, 13 per cent. Latin, and 13 per cent. French, the remaining 4 per cent. being composed of words derived from different sources. One fact is peculiar. With all his liking for Greek, and his well-known attainments in that language, his usage of words derived from that source does not equal 1 per cent. Even on topics involving an appeal to early history, such as the theological side of the discussion on the Parliamentary Oaths Bill, Mr. Gladstone's language is scarcely more classical, as the figures in the latter instance stood thus: Saxon, 72 per cent.; Latin, 15 per cent.; French, 11 per cent.; other words, 2 per cent., of which Greek again forms less than 1 per cent.

An analysis of the speeches of the leader of the Opposition shows that in his language there is a great similarity with the component parts of Mr. Gladstone's. Sir Stafford Northcote's speeches give the following results: Saxon, 70 per cent.; Latin, 16 per cent.; French, 11 per cent.; other words, 3 per cent.

Sir William Harcourt is a forcible speaker, and, when occasion requires, he is without an equal in invective and sarcasm; in general his speeches, both in style of delivery and subject matter, are much above the average of the House. They show the following results: Saxon, 77 per cent.; Latin, 15 per cent.; French, 7 per cent.; other words, 1 per cent.

Mr. Bright does not speak much now, and since his great speech on the Irish Land Act of 1881, which kept the House crowded until long past midnight, he has spoken comparatively seldom in Parliament. There is no question as to his being a great orator. As a speaker he has always been regarded as an Englishman of the English; but, strange to say, an analysis of some of his later speeches gives figures which vary but little from those of the other speakers already quoted. They stand thus: Saxon, 74 per cent.; Latin, 12 per cent.; French, 10 per cent.; other words, 4 per cent.

No one could possibly refer to the prominent speakers in the House without including Lord Randolph Churchill, for lately, upon all subjects, great and small, he has had a great deal to say. A speech of his on the franchise question gives the following results: Saxon, 72 per cent.; Latin, 16 per cent.; French, 6 per cent.; Greek, 2 per cent.; other words, 4 per cent.

Naturally the best speakers in the House are looked for among the occupants of the first two benches, but below them are many good speakers, like Mr. Cowan and Mr. Morley, are to be found; and, whatever may be said for the opinions and tactics of the Irish party, it must be confessed that there are some very able speakers to be found in its ranks. From these few figures two facts are deducible—first, that the language of all the speakers quoted approximates greatly to one standard; and secondly, that the greatest strength of the language is derived from the Saxon element. Taking the words derived from the French as being originally Latin, it may be said that of the language used in the House of Commons, three-fourths comes from the Saxon, and one-fourth from the Latin. Both our political and literary history of the past accounts for the number of Latin words used, but still they are only words of general acceptance, and words whose import is perfectly well understood. The utilitarian theory applies nowhere more strongly than in the case of a language, and if a word is useful it is sure to be retained.

A Little Hero.

A sad story of a French drummer boy is told at Heidelberg, in connection with the last siege of that city. The Austrians were in possession of the place, and the only means of attacking them was by crossing the old bridge over the river Neckar. But the defenders were well prepared for the attack; they placed their cannon in such a manner that it covered the bridge and its approaches. The French planted their cannon on the opposite side of the river, and kept up a terrible fire, but were utterly unable to dislodge the Austrians from their end of the bridge. The attackers were determined to take the city, but had no other means of doing so than by crossing the bridge, and that was swept by the guns of the opponents. They made repeated charges from their side, but each time they advanced they were mowed down by the Austrian artillery, or repulsed at the point of the bayonet. The French band advanced as far as the centre of the bridge, exciting the soldiery with their martial strains, but were compelled to retreat with the retreating men. Again and again the musicians advanced and retreated, with their comrades, until at last, a little drummer, disdaining flight, mounted on the parapet of the bridge, and although his fellow-bandsmen fled, with the soldiers, stood his ground manfully, beating a wild air to recall the men to the charge. On rushed the fierce Austrians with fixed bayonets, whilst the little hero, still beating his drum defiantly, was run through the body by some brutal foe. As he fell over the bridge into the rapid rushing river below, the poor boy cried out, "Oh, my mother! my mother!" The last words of the little conscript were heard, both by friend and foe, and are

yet remembered in Heidelberg. On wild nights, as the peasant crosses the bridge, in fancy he still sees the form of the little drummer-boy beating the fierce alarm, and still amid the rush of the waters he imagines that he hears his dying words, "Oh, my mother! my mother!"

A Substitute for Sardines.

A *Tribune* correspondent at Lubeck, Me., makes the announcement that the sardines imported from the Mediterranean are rapidly becoming a tradition. A substitute has been found in small herrings which are caught on the coast of Maine and New Brunswick. In 1876 the first canning factory was established in Eastport, and since then eighteen other factories have been started there, besides eight at Lubeck, three at Jonesport, two at Robinston, and one at each of half a dozen near by places. The business extends from the middle of April to the middle of December of each year. In 1877 there were packed 1,500 cases of 160 cans each, whereas in 1883 there were sent to market 200,000 cases. About five cents will cover the actual amount of converting the herrings into a lot of sardines. Says the correspondent: "To catch the fish, weirs are constructed, built of piles driven where the water is about twenty feet deep, and the spaces between interlaced with rails and brush. An opening is left in the weir, through which the fish enter at high water, and a deep seine closes this aperture when the weir is well filled. Before low water, the fisherman, with a large scoop net, take the fish out of the weir into their boats. The fish are offered for sale by the hogsheadful to about seventy-five boatmen employed by the different factories. When there has been a large 'catch,' the bidding is dull and the prices are low; but when only a few of the weirs have been replenished the competing bidders become excited, and a looker-on is reminded of a stock exchange. Early in 1877 one dollar per hogshead was thought to be a good price; but in the last year \$30 has been paid. After the highest bidder has secured his stock, he starts his boat and hoists a signal flag, to notify his employers that he is on his way to their factory."

Dexterous cutters—mostly boys and girls—trim off the heads of the fish and draw the intestines with one movement of their knives. The fish finally reaches the flaking-room well-washed and drained. "The flakes," says the correspondent, "are wire trays about two feet by three in size. The flaking is performed by women. The fish are spread in a single layer on the flake to avoid contact while baking. When a flake is full it is moved to a rack in front of the oven. The oven is fitted with ten revolving frames or skeletons, which altogether hold forty flakes. The man who works the oven takes each flake from the rack and places it on a revolving frame. By the time the last frame is filled the flakes on the first one are sufficiently baked. On the removal of these to the racks they are immediately replaced by other flakes of fresh fish.

From the racks men take the baked fish to the packing tables, where women assort and pack them in tin boxes, from the smallest variety to the largest packed in an oval can and henceforth to be known as sea trout. When a tray of cans has been picked and covered with oil and the other ingredients used, it is handed to the "header," who inserts the cover, and from him it is passed to the sealing-room, where the covers are soldered. After soldering they are packed in a cooler and then placed under heavy pressure in a steam process kettle. The boxes are then each tapped at both ends, and through one hole hot oil is injected until it flows out of the other, when they are both quickly sealed, and put into a revolving cleaner and are rapidly whirled in sawdust. They are then scrutinized by the taster. If by the pressure of his hands he perceives a leak, it goes to the leak mender and is again revolved in sawdust. Nothing remains now but to label and nail up in cases, when they are ready for shipment to New York, and are thence soon distributed through all parts of the country.

How They Saved the Bank.

Many years ago, in consequence of a commercial panic, there was a severe run on a bank in South Wales, and the small farmers jostled each other in crowds to draw out their money. Things were rapidly going from bad to worse, when the bank manager, in a fit of desperation, suddenly bethought him of an expedient. By his directions, a clerk, having heated some sovereigns in a frying-pan, paid them over the counter to an anxious applicant. "Why, they're quite hot," said the latter, as he took them up. "Of course," was the reply; "what else could you expect? They are only just out of the mold. We are coming them by hundreds as fast as we can."

"Coining them!" thought the simple agriculturist. "Then there is no fear of the money running short!" With this their confidence revived, the panic abated, and the bank was enabled to weather the storm.

Slaving by Wire.

Superfluous hair, and especially that which disfigures the faces of women and girls, is now removed by a process termed electrolysis. An ordinary galvanic battery and a fine needle, the latter attached to the negative cord, are all the instruments required. The number of cells needed depends upon the activity of the battery, the delicacy of the patient's skin, and the strength of the hairs to be removed. The needle, which is a fine flexible one, is introduced into the small sack which holds the root of the hair, and by means of the galvanic current the point from which the hair grows is effectually and completely destroyed.

What the Moon is Doing.

The tides are caused mainly by the moon, as it were, catching hold of the water as the earth revolves around on its axis. This must cause friction on the earth as it revolves, and friction, as everyone knows, causes loss of power. Suppose a wheel, with hair around it, to run like a circular brush such as is used for hair-brushing by machinery; if this brush be revolving rapidly, and we hold our hand ever so lightly on the hair so that it is slightly rubbed backward as the wheel revolves, we can understand that the speed of the wheel will be gradually diminished, until at last it will be brought to a standstill, provided there is no additional power communicated to the wheel, by machinery or hand, beyond what was given to set it spinning around. Now, this is somewhat analogous to what is happening to the earth in its rotation. There is reason to suppose that the action of the tides is slowly but surely lessening the speed of the earth's rotation, and, consequently, increasing the length of the day, and that this action will continue until the earth revolves on its own axis in the same time that the moon takes to revolve around the earth.

Then the day, instead of being twenty-four hours, as now, will be about twenty-eight days, and the earth will be exposed to the full blaze of the sun for about fourteen days at a time. The change this will bring about on the earth can hardly be exaggerated. All life, both animal and vegetable, will be destroyed; all water will be evaporated; the solid rocks will be scorched and cracked; and the whole world reduced to a dreary and barren wilderness. It is supposed by some that the moon has already passed through all this, hence its shattered and bare-looking surface; that the earth, being so much larger, has more quickly acted upon the oceans which once were upon the moon's surface, and stopped almost entirely its revolution around its own axis, thus causing it to have a day equal to twenty-eight of our days, and the heat of the sun has already done to it what in future ages it will do to the earth.

Scotch Curling.

In the course of time a great many anecdotes have gathered about the game, and stories are repeated illustrating its fascination, its development of the virtues, and its superior attraction over anything else in life, except beef, greens and whiskey. It is said that the presence of the minister and gentlemen in the game restrains profanity. A player who could not entirely control his indignation at a stupid comrade, and did not like to inform him before the minister where he was going, exclaimed, "It's a guid thing ye're gaun where there'll be nae ice." An enthusiastic Kilmarnock curler, absorbed in the game from day to day during favorable weather, expressed his earnest hope that his wife, who was ill, "wadna dee till there cam a thaw, for otherwise he wadna be able to attend her burial." A couple of farm servants saw the minister going to the curling pond. One of them criticised him, and said that instead of curling every day he ought to be making sermons and visiting the folk. But the other defended him, and thought he should take every chance he could get at hurling the stone. "If I were a minister, and there was only man in the parish wadna tak' at least one day's guid curling every winter, I can tell you what it is, lads, I wad keep him back at the sacrament."

The Rev. Adam Wadderstone, minister in Bathgate, was an excellent man and curler, who died in 1780. Late one Saturday night one of his elders received a challenge from the people of Shotts to the curlers of Bathgate to meet them early Monday morning; and after tossing about half the night at a loss how to convey the pleasing news to the minister, he determined to tell him before he entered the pulpit.

When Mr. Wadderstone came into the session house, the elder said to him in a low tone, "Sir, I've something to tell ye; there's to be a parish play with the Shotts folk the morn, at—"

"Whist, man, whist!" was the rejoinder. "Oh, fie shame, John! fie shame! Nae speaking to-day about worldly recreations."

But the ruling passion proved too strong for the worthy clergyman's scruples of conscience, for just as he was about to enter the inner door of the church he suddenly wheeled round and returned to the elder, who was now standing at the plate in the lobby, and whispered in his ear, "But whan's the hour, John? I'll be sure and be there."

Let us all sing,

That music dear to a curler's ear,
And joined by him alone—
The merry clink of the curling rink
And the boom of the roaring stone.

The Mysterious Bag.

Make two bags each about a foot long and six inches wide, of some dark material, and sew them together at the edge, so that one may be inside the other. Next make a number of pockets, each with a cover to it, which may be fastened down with a button and loop. Place these about two inches apart, between the two bags, sewing one side of the pocket to one bag and the other side to the other. Make slits through both bags about an inch long, just above the pockets, so that you can put your hand in the bags; and, by inserting your thumb and finger through these slits, you may obtain entrance to the pockets and bring out of them whatever they contain. It is, of course, necessary that a variety of articles should be put in the pockets. Before commencing the trick you may turn the bag inside out any number of times, so that your audience may conclude that it is quite empty. You can then cause to appear or disappear any number of articles of a light nature, much to the amusement of your audience.