BITTEN BY A WHALE

By Ralph E. Cropley.

In the old days a whaling voyage used to last the best part of three years. Judging from where the Essex, of New Bedford, was when a whale sank her on Nov. 13, 1820, we are led to conclude that she had put to sea at least two years before.

Following the usual track of New Bedford whalers, her skipper no doubt had first crosed the Atlantic toward the Azores, worked his way south and then headed east and up into the Indian Ocean. Probably he had gone through the Strait of Halacca and, passing the Philippines, had kept east of Japan until he had reached the Sea of Okhotsk. After completing his catch there, he had probably worked down toward the Sandwich Islands and probably was on his way southwest toward New Zealand when, on that unlucky 13th of November the lookout shouted, "There she blows!" and three boats with killing parties put off.

The boat crews were at once lucky; each got its harpoon into a whale. The first mate's prize proved to be especially frisky once it felt the lance. Raising its gigantic tail, it rolled from side to side until the surrounding sea was white with froth. Then down came a huge fluke on the gunwale of the boat, and so severe was the blow that the first mate had to cut loose from his catch and give all his attention to getting his damaged boat back to the Essex.

Only his remarkable seamanship enabled him to save himself and his crew for the whale, which was of the largest variety and which evidently was the dam of a small whale that the men in the captain's boat were capturing, made rushes at his boat and tried to crunch it in her massive jaws. Somehow the boat reached the Essex, but the men had no sooner scrambled up the sides than the mother whale charged the ship. The blow was staggering. As the whale scraped under the bottom she knocked off part of the false keel just abreast of the main channels. All hands thought surely that the end had come, but the ship righted herself and continued on her course.

But Madame Whale was not through. Coming up alongside, she tried, somewhat to the amusement of the crew, to clasp the Essex in her jaws. The sailors hurled many harpoons into the enraged fish, but they did not drive her off. At last, finding that she was not succeeding in her purpose, the whale turned and, going under the stern, came up on the other side. Then she began to swim off, and the men on the Essex were afraid that she was making to attack the other two boats. But after she had swum for perhaps a quarter of a mile she turned round on her tail and with lightning speed made for the Essex. This time, instead of choosing to strike the vessel amidships, she choose the bow just under the catheads. Though the Essex was going at four or five knots an hour when the crash came, the vessel, more than merely stopping dead, acquired sufficient sternway to send the sea smashing through the aft cabin ports.

The shock of the blow flung every man to the deck. The bows were as completely stove in as if the ship had collided with another vessel. Since water was rushing in fore and aft, it was not long before the Essex, weighted down with her two years' catch of whale oil, filled and went over on her beam ends; her towering masts and sails dipped in the sea.

At the time the captain's boat and that of the second mate were both fast to whales. On beholding the awful catastrophe both crews immediately cut loose from their fish and made for the wreck. As soon as the captain got aboard he gave orders to cut away the masts. Since the vessel had careened on her side, the task was not easy. Yet, being used to facing all kinds of emergencies, the men soon chopped off the three masts and the weighty spars and sails, and the vessel righted herself.

It was readily seen that the Essex could no longer afford shelter to her crew. Her decks were awash, and there was no dry place aboard her. Salvaging what food he could, the skipper ordered all hands into the longboats. For some time, hoping that another whaler would come on the grounds, the men remained by the abandoned wreck; but at last, when no help came, the boats stood away to the south. The men hoped to reach some one of the groups of islands that dot the southwestern Pacific, but the winds were unfavorable.

The official record of the catastrophe says that for thirty days the boats continued to beat about and were carried eastward toward the middle of the Pacific, where islands are few and scattered. On the thirtieth day they reached an island that probably was one of those rocky, barren bits of land between the group known as the Society Islands and Valparaiso, Chile.

The island offered the shipwrecked sailors scarcely any nourishment, and the captain decided that the only thing to do was to put to sea once more and try to reach the coast of South America. Three of the men decided that, rather than venture forth on such a long journey in an open boat, they would remain on the island. The rest set forth, and after a succession of misadventures, regarding which there seems to be no record, those who remained of the crew reached Valparaiso, where they found in port the United States frigate Macedonian. On learning that three American sailors were marooned on a barren island in the middle of the Pacific, Captain Downes, the commander, resolved to rescue them. At the expense of one thousand dollars, a large sum for 1820, he fitted out a Chilean schooner and sent her in search of the unfortunates. But after a month at sea, during which time storms drove her off her course, and eventually dismasted her, she limped back to Valparaiso.

At that Captain Downes was for setting out in the frigate, but unfortunately he did not have to go; for the captain of the British ship Surrey, which was on the eve of sailing for Australia, agreed, for the sum of three hundred dollars, to run a bit out of his course and rescue the stranded sailors.

On Thursday, April 5, 1821, almost five months after the whale had wrecked the Essex, and four months after the boats had set out from the island for South America, the commander of the Surrey sighted an island that he thought might be the one on which the Americans were. As he came near it he discharged a signal gun. Looking through his telescope, he saw the three men for whom he was searching come from the woods and begin to wave frantically. The rescue was accomplished with difficulty but with eventual success.—Youth's Companion.

A Skirmish of Wits.

The eminent painter, James McNeill Whistler, was as famous for his wit as for his art. There are scores of stories about the quickness and sharpness of his tongue, many of which are "classics of anecdotage." Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson tells some that are less familiar in his Random Recollections.

Whistler, he says, frequented the Beefsteak Club a great deal and was very popular there. Though a good many members tried to match wits with him, he always had the best of every exchange. On only one occasion do I remember his being "graveled," and that was when a reporter printed in his newspaper that "Whistler and Oscar Wilde were seen on the Brighton front, talking as usual about themselves." Whistler sent the paragraph to Wilde, with a brief note saying: "I wish these reporters would be accurate; if you remember, Oscar we were talking about me."

Wilde sent him a telegram saying: "It is true, Jimmie, we were talking about you, but I was thinking of myself!"

But whistler got his revenge, for, some time after, he was bidden to Oscar Wilde's wedding. Wilde, as the service was about to begin, received a telegram from him, saying: "Am detained, don't wait."

Perpetuation by Use.

Wise forest protection does not mean the withdrawal of forest resources, whether of wood, water, or grass, from contributing their full share to the welfare of the people, but, on the contrary, gives assurance of larger and more certain supplies. The fundamental idea of forestry is the perpetuation of forests by use. Forest protection is not an end of itself; it is a means to increase and sustain the resources of our country and the industries which depend on them.

Invented Telescope.

The telescope was invented by Hans Lippsrshey, a Dutch spectacle-maker, in 1609.

Stranded in India.

The English aviators who tried to fly round the world two years ago had many misfortunes before their final wreck in the Indian Ocean. One night in Sibi, just over the borders of Baluchistan,—so we learn from Maj. W. T. Blake in Flying Round the World,—they had a miserable rest owing to mosquitoes, sand flies and fleas and the terrific heat. They decided therefore to push on at daylight to Quetta eight miles away in the mountains. The morning was misty; as soon as they got into the air they found that they could not see landmarks and so returned to the field at once. On landing they broke the undercarriage and the tail skid of their machine.

To say, writes Major Blake, that we were annoyed, is to put it mildly. We had no petrol; we had no facilities for repairing the broken undercarriage, and we were miles away from help. The only thing to do was to telephone through to Quetta to ask for a mechanic and the necessary supplies to be sent down to us. Luckily the railway authorities had a telephone along the line from Sibi, so that with comparatively little delay I managed to speak to an officer of the R.A.F. stationed up in the hills. He promised to send a break-down party with the things we needed.

All that morning we worked. The temperature greatly increased until it equalled the previous day's heat of 119 deg. and then went on climbing until it touched 121 deg. in the shade. We kept as far as possible in the shade thrown by the wings of the machine, moving the aeroplane round as the sun moved, so that the shadow always fell about the undercarriage where we were working; moreover, we were wearing huge topees and thick spine pads. At intervals during the day natives brought large boxes of ice and dozens of bottles of soda water from the station.

We endured another night of terrific heat and sand flies. We arose before dawn the following morning, and soon afterward the break-down party arrived, having had a rough journey from Quetta. Despite their fatigue they at once started to work on our machine and by lunch time had it ready for service.

Again the heat was intense; the thermometer steadily climber until it reached 123 deg. in the shade and about 170 deg. in the sun—a temperature in which it is almost impossible for Europeans to live. We filled our tanks and got ready to take off, but just as we were starting up the engine one of the mechanics suddenly collapsed. We had a little ice left, and with it we proceeded to do our best to bring him round, laying him under the wings of the machine in order that he might have the only available shade. Then without warning the sergeant-major who was with the party fell in a heap. We had no more ice, and he was obviously in such a bad way that we had to give up all idea of starting.

I went as quickly as possible down to the station hospital to get help and ice. As I climber into the tonga to gallop away for assistance two more men collopsed, and by the time I got to the hospital an Indian who had been helping us and who was with me in the tonga was also overcome. It was wonderful how everyone had managed to bear up until the work was done. It was probably only the fact that all three of us knew that we had to keep going that enabled us to carry on. The next morning we flew to Quetta.

No Need for Alarm.

Maid—"M'm, I just accidentally let the baby's blanket drop out of the window."

Mother—"Awfully clumsy of you; now baby will catch cold.'

Maid—"Oh, no, m'm, he won't. He was inside of it."

Use of Time.

Employ thy time well if thou meanest to gain leisure; since you are not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.—Benjamin Franklin.

THIS PIECE OF PAPER!

It Was Once Part of a Tree.

It is a big jump from a piece of wood to a sheet of paper, but this page probably started its journey paperwards as the trunk of a tree in some northern forest.

You see, to-day, the forests of Norway, Sweden, Canada, and the United States furnish the bulk of the world's paper-makng material.

A sheet of paper is a sheet of vegetable fibres matted together, dyed, and surfaced according to requirements. And it is from wood that the fibrous part of the paper is obtained.

The wood-pulp, as it is called, is made in this manner. The trees are cut into logs, about two feet long, split and the bark and knots carefully removed.

The logs are ground up by revolving stone wheels, water being supplied to keep them cool, and to mix with the wood to form the pulp.

This pulp contains all the impurities after the first grinding, so it is strained through a wire sieve, which allows the finer pulp to pass.

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The good pulp, still containing impurities, is now subjected to a refining process in a machine resembling two huge grindstones placed one on top of the other.

The top stone revolves, and the pulp is fed through a hole in this, being finely ground between the two stones.

Our "tree" is now ready to take on its first appearance in the form of a "sheet."

The refined pulp is passed over a wire gauze cylinder on to a felt conveyor which passes it to a pair of steel rollers, the top one taking up the end of the web of pulp and gradually winding it upon itself.

When the necessary thickness has been attained, the pulp is taken off the roller, opened out and dried. In this state it is termed "half stuff boards."

But paper made solely from this mechanical wood-pulp—to use its trade name—would be too coarse and impure, and would quickly discolor and turn brittle. It is therefore invariably mixed with a finer grade of pulp which has been chemically prepared.

The better quality, instead of being ground, is cut into small pieces, and boiled in a solution of sulphite of soda, in huge vats.

The boiling process extracts the impurities of the wood, and breaks it up into pulp which is then drained off, washed and made into "half stuff boards" as already described.

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To produce an even surface the correct proportions of the "half stuff boards" are loaded with china clay and so on; and to ensure a white color a solution of blue is introduced into the machine. Sizing material is also added. This prevents the oil in the printing ink running when the paper is printed on.

We are well on our way now to the finished sheet of paper.

The pulp is strained carefully and conveyed to the paper-making machine, running on to an endless belt of wire mesh, about forty feet long by eight feet wide.

This belt, now coated with a wet sheet of pulp, is supported by brass rollers, moisture being extracted from the pulp by suction. The pulp sheet next passes under a roller which renders the surface smooth. At this point the wire belt makes its return journey under the rollers and further moisture still is extracted from the damp sheet of pulp as it passes over some steam-heated cylinders.

As the paper comes from the last drying cylinder it is wound upon reels, which contain in some cases, miles and miles of paper.

In this reeled condition it is cut to a required width—ready for use.

A Bargain in Millinery.

Here is a story of a family who are chronic borrowers.

One Sunday morning when Mr. Borrower wished to shave he sent one of the numerous small Borrowers to Mr. Jones.

"Daddy is shaving this morning, and his razor is dull," said the child. "He wants to know if he can borrow your strop?"

With much reluctance Mr. Jones surrendered the strop. Ten minutes lates another small Borrower appeared.

"Daddy thinks the reason he can't shave is because he hasn't got enough soap. Can he borrow yours?"

Mr. Jones made him a present of the soap. Five minutes elapsed; then a third child arrived. "Daddy's razor isn't any good, an dhe sent me to borrow yours," he said.

But at this point a long-suffering lender drew the line.

But the neighborhood got most amusement over the experience of Mrs. Gray. She is a young and very pretty woman, and her new spring hat was very pretty, too. But before she had a chance to wear it young Miss Borrower asked if she might have the hat to wear to a party. And Mrs. Gray hadn't the courage to refuse.

Twice more the young woman borrowed the hat and wore it; and then Mrs. Gray declared to her husband that she would have to give her the hat, for she should certainly never wear it herself.

The next time the young lady called Mr. Gray answered the doorbell.

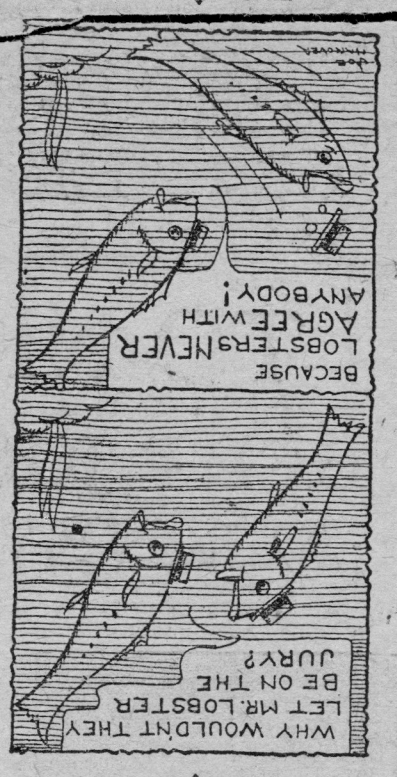
"Is Mrs. Grap at home?"

"Yes; but she isn't feeling well and is resting. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Perhaps you can. I came to see if I could borrow her hat, the new one with the pink roses, to wear to a party to-night. She sometimes lends it to me."

"Well, I don't feel that I can lend Mrs. Gray's hat without her permission, and I don't want to disturb her while she is resting. But I'll tell you what I will do: I'll let you wear my hat."

Miss Borrower left, too furious to be articulate. But the next afternoon, when she knew Mr. Gray was not at home, she called again for the hat; and this time Mrs. Gray gave it to her. It was presented with gracious courtesy and accepted as a matter of course.



Less than half a pound of radium has been produced in the world since Mme. Curie discovered this precious element in 1898.

Exports of paper and paper products from Canada during the fiscal year 1924-25 were valued at $99,941,910 as against $96,957,962 in the previous twelve months. Newsprint exports accounts for nearly 92 per cent. of this total.

One of the finest hunting and fishing districts in the world is said to be in the district of Gaspe Bay, a sheltered bit of water on the northeast end of Gaspe Peninsula.