

THE PURSER'S NERVE

HAD TO KEEP HIS WITS WHILE THE SHIP WAS SINKING.

He Told the Story to the Gallia's Shipwrecked Passengers—in the Matter of Nerve He Went the Amateur Photographer One Better.

It was a cozy room, with antique hangings and furniture and walls hung with handsome works of art which could be only indistinctly seen by the light of the flickering fire on the hearth. The little party agreed with the beautiful hostess that the room was just dark enough for a ghost story. "I don't know a ghost story," said one of the men, "but the dramatic rescue of the Vendram's passengers by the St. Louis reminds me of my experience on board the old Gallia when she was caught in a hurricane in midwinter about 700 miles from Queenstown. The waves broke in our decks and flooded the cabins, and nobody thought for a little while that any one on board the vessel would ever see land again. There was no panic, no shouting, no weeping, and it seemed that all were perfectly prepared to go, though they looked far from happy floundering about in the water dressed in such garments as they could grasp when they were aroused from their sleep by the crash which sent tons of water into the ship. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning. The steward had begun to set the table for breakfast, and, as I recall the picture, I can see men and women, most of them with heavy wraps over their nightgowns, standing on the table and dancing a forced minuet between the guard rails and the dishes.

"At one end of the cabin, while others were silently praying, stood a young fellow with nothing on but a suit of blue and white pyjamas, holding a snap camera in front of him. 'If you folks'll hold still a minute,' he said, 'we'll have a picture of this if we ever get out of it.' And for a moment people forgot the terrible situation, and I have always believed that one of the women adjusted her water soaked gown so that she might look well in the picture taken under the shadow of the destroying angel.

"Well, we got through it all right, although we came to Liverpool in a sadly battered condition, and when they hoisted the trunks from the hold the water ran out of them as though each piece was a sieve. We had service on board the ship the Sunday following the disaster, and, although two days had passed since we thought we were gone, we seemed only then to appreciate fully what had happened. Men and women who had shown no sign of fear now shopped in corners with trembling lips, unable to speak because of the lump in their throats, and the service of song was a flat failure, because no one could sing any more than the young woman of the organ could get a note out of that water soaked, dripping piece of furniture.

"We reached Liverpool too late at night to leave the ship, and the men, who had become better acquainted than they would have been on a less tempestuous voyage, gathered in the saloon and for the hundredth time exchanged congratulations.

"This was nothing," said our purser, "to the experience I once had, and not so long ago. To go down with all hands must be hard enough, but to be the only one of a whole shipful to go and to see all the rest saved—that's pretty hard. That came near being my case, and I don't want another similar experience.

"I was an officer on the Ohio when she knocked a hole in her bottom, and I helped transfer the passengers and give what we could. When all had been sent to the ship which came to our relief, we made ready for the last boatload, of which I was to be one. We had a lot of money and valuables in the ship's safe, and I went below, took a blanket from the cabin table, and into this dumped the contents of the various compartments of the safe. I made a bag of it, carried it on deck, and when I came to where the boat could have been I found that it had gone, and I, with the treasure, was left on the rapidly sinking ship. I can think of any number of situations which I could have preferred to mine just then. The wind being against me, I could not make myself heard. I put up signals, and no one would ever guess what I did then. I wanted to keep my wits about me and block all chances for nervousness, so I did what requires a man's full attention—began to shave, and I doubt whether I ever did a cleaner or a better job.

"By the time I had finished my companions must have missed me, for I could see them returning, and when they came alongside there were not many inches to step down from the sinking big boat to the little thing that took us away. I tell you this story to show how necessary it is to have nerve on board ship."

"And did he tell it for a true story?" asked the hostess. "He swore to every detail." "Then he did have nerve."—New York Tribune.

The Dear Child. Little Tommie—Sister Lillian likes to have you come here. Mr. Simperling—Aw, indeed! How do you know that? Little Tommie—Well, people always like what makes them glad, don't they? Mr. Simperling—Generally. But how do you know I make her glad? Little Tommie—I heard her tellin' one of the other girls today that she just had to laugh every time she looked at you.—Cleveland Leader.

South. "Have you ever traveled in the South?" asked the New Orleans man of the chap from Bangor, Me. "Oh, yes, indeed," said the Maine man. "I have been to Boston and New York."—Harper's Bazar.

GAME BETTER THAN GOLF.

The Man From Jersey Lowers His Record For Train Catching.

His countenance suffused with satisfaction and his walk expressing triumph, the man from Jersey made his matutinal descent upon the metropolis. Without waiting for questions he began the poem of his joy.

"Knocked seven-eighths of a second off my record this morning," he said. "I simply can't be beat. Nineteen and a quarter minutes from the arms of Morpheus, through ablutions, vestiture, nutrition, conjugal admonition and a half mile of geography to the confines of a car, and there you are. Giving all proper handicaps, by this performance I win the cup, and I'm going down to the engine house tonight to get it.

"Maybe you thought we didn't have any sporting blood out in my country? You never heard of a links from me, and you never saw me going around like a gosh bingene umbrella mender with my arms full of shiny sticks. No, siree! But we have a diversion that beats golf all hollow in making time for the trains—one that lasts all the year round. Records? What are the records of putting little pills into little holes to the records pinned up in our little depot, records of honest toil that appeal to the instincts of all industrious men? I tell you that the desiccated individual who thinks he abides in joy when he has quartered over a county in one stroke less than he ever did before is an object of pity to the man who is trying to cut off a fraction of a second from the passing from sound sleep to the busy railroad.

"He is engaged in a useful occupation. He is trying to demonstrate the capacities of the wonderful human engine and at the same time adding to the well being of the race by lengthening the hours of sleep. Any scientist will tell you that the great fault with man is that he doesn't sleep enough. You take my advice and quit golf and come live in the country and keep tabs on your transits like me, and if that ain't enough you can go down to the engine house on Sunday afternoon, when there ain't any trains, and pitch quoits."—New York Sun.

GARFIELD'S STRUGGLES.

How He Burned the Midnight Oil When at Williams College.

Garfield was said to be only one of a very few who kept up their literary studies while in Washington. He never did so well but it seemed he could easily do better. He always gave the impression that he had much more power than he used. As Trevelyan said of his parliamentary hero, Garfield succeeded because all the world could not have kept him in the background, and because, once in front, he played his part with an intrepidity and a commanding ease that were but the outward symptoms of the immense reserve of energy on which it was in his power to draw.

"When I was a freshman in Williams college," said Garfield, "I looked out one night and saw in the window of my only competitor for first place in mathematics a light twinkling a few minutes longer than I was wont to keep mine burning. I then and there determined to invest a little more time in preparation for the next day's recitation. I did so and passed above my rival. I smile today at the old rivalry, but I am thankful for the way my attention was called to the value of a little margin of time well employed. I have since learned that it is just such a margin, whether of time or attention or earnestness or power, that wins in every battle, great or small."—Success.

Prototype of the Du Maurier Girl.

On the mantelpiece in my studio at home there stands a certain lady. She is but lightly clad, and what simple garment she wears is not in the fashion of our day. How well I know her! Almost thoroughly by this time, for she has been the silent companion of my work for 30 years. She has lost both her arms and one of her feet, which I deplore, and also the tip of her nose, but that has been made good.

She is only three feet high or thereabouts and quite 2,000 years old or more, but she is ever young—

Age cannot wither nor custom stale Her infinite variety—

and a very gianness in beauty, for she is a reduction in plaster of the famous statue of the Louvre.

They call her the Venus of Milo or Melos. It is a calumny, a libel. She is no Venus except in good looks, and if she errs at all it is on the side of austerity. She is not only "pootiness," but "wirtue" incarnate (if one can be incarnate in marble) from the crown of her lovely head to the sole of her remaining foot—a very beautiful foot, though by no means a small one—it has never worn a high heel shoe.—George du Maurier in Harper's Magazine.

Easy.

"Oh, see here! Come and look at Dickinson's manuscripts!" were the first words that fell upon my receptive ears. Dickinson! Such is fame! The speech fell from the lips of a middle aged lady comfortable in appearance, admirably dressed. "Dickens—Dickens," proclaimed her spouse rather sharply. "Didn't I say Dickens? Well, I meant Dickinson." Then she went on: "Fancy him making all those corrections—such a famous writer. Why, I always thought it was so easy, John."—London News.

Only three people know the password of the Tower of London, and they are the queen, the lord mayor and the constable. This password is sent to the lord mayor quarterly, signed by her majesty. It is merely a survival of an old custom.

The north of Ireland is justly famed for holiday resorts, for its beautiful scenery and many spots of historical interest.

FRENCH MARRIAGES.

MATRIMONY THE GREAT OBJECT TO ALL GIRLS OF FRANCE.

Customs In This Particular Have Changed Radically—At the Present Time the Personal Inclinations of Young Women Are Considered.

Miss Anna L. Bicknell is an English lady who has had most unusual opportunities for studying French life. For a number of years she was a governess in the household of Napoleon III and resided in the Tuilleries. For The Century Miss Bicknell has written an article on "French Wives and Mothers." Miss Bicknell says:

The old marriage de convenance, which ransomed so much sorrow and consequent evil in former days, when a girl was taken out of a convent to be shown the man to whom she was about to be married, is now a thing of the past. It must be acknowledged, however, that marriages are still made up, often too hastily and superficially, by nicely balanced family arrangements and by the intervention of friends. Nevertheless, attraction and repulsion are now taken into consideration, and a girl is no longer forced to marry a man whom she positively dislikes. I could quote instances in the very highest (historical) aristocracy where, at the last moment, after the trousseau had been sent in (marked, according to custom, with the united initial letters of the two names elaborately embroidered) and all the social preparations made, the marriage was broken off because the bride had declared that she could not "get accustomed" to the bridegroom nor endure the idea of seeing his face in her home during her natural life. In one of these instances the family lamentations over the initials of the trousseau were really amusing. Fortunately a substitute was soon found whose name, like that of the rejected suitor, began with an X, and the complications were thus happily settled.

The great object of the French girl's life is marriage. From the time of her birth her parents have prepared for this event, and in many cases they have considerably straitened their income and curtailed their enjoyments to make up her dot. Every girl in every class is expected to have something. Those who have nothing are exceptions and constitute a minority of old maids. The girls who from choice do not marry generally become nuns, usually much against the wishes of their parents. The old tales of young women being forced into convents to improve the position of their brothers are forgotten in these days, when, while no child can on any pretense be deprived of a share in the father's inheritance, monastic vows are not recognized by law. Nuns and spinners are exceptions; marriage is the rule.

When a girl is of age to be introduced into society, her friends and relatives immediately look out for a suitable husband, whom it is considered highly desirable to obtain before she has reached the age of 21, that she may not be proclaimed fille majeure when the banns are published. The principal considerations are equality of birth, of position, of fortune, and in the last particular the scale is usually expected to weigh rather more on the side of the young lady, especially if the young man, in addition to sufficient present advantages, can bring forward a number of relatives not likely to live long. This is called having hopes (des esperances)—beau coup d'esperances. If the young lady with a substantial dot can also show a satisfactory background of invalid uncles and aunts, then everything is as it should be, and the young people are brought together with every prospect of a favorable conclusion. It happens, however, too often that they do not know each other sufficiently, and that they are persuaded to believe that the mutual liking is greater than it really is. Sometimes this sort of undefined attraction ripens into a deep and devoted love. When this occurs, there are no more affectionate wives or more faithful widows than Frenchwomen.

More frequently, especially in the higher classes, a sort of cool friendliness springs up, where they see but little of each other, and freedom is enjoyed on both sides. The authority of the husband is less felt than in an English household. There is a sort of understanding that in her home the wife is queen and settles matters as she pleases.

But their best and warmest feelings are awakened by all that concerns their children. French parents are perhaps the most affectionate in the world. The interests and welfare of their children are their first consideration, and wonderful sacrifices of their own pleasure and enjoyment are made in favor of their sons and daughters by the most worldly men and women. These are taken as a matter of course; no one thinks of doing otherwise or of seeing any merit in such acts.

The mothers especially are unequalled. Nothing will stand in the way of a Frenchwoman where her children's interests are concerned. This love is so engrossing that it swallows up every other. They are more mothers than wives, and if called upon to choose between allowing a husband to go alone on a foreign mission or leaving their children they would not hesitate. "Mes enfants avant tout."

More Proof.

O'Hoolahan—Countin the two min yesterday, there's been 13 kilt so far on the noo buildin' goin up across the street.

O'Callahan (impressively)—That's another proof av the unluckiness av the number 13.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Oysters after they have been brought away from the sea know by instinct the exact hour when the tide is rising and approaching their beds, and so of their own accord open their shells to receive their food from the sea, as if they were still at home.

A GEORGIA HEN COOP.

It Was Sure Proof Against the Inroads of Outsiders.

"There isn't a more faithful being on earth," said a Georgia business man to a reporter, "than one of our Georgia darkies. Neither is there one more superstitious, nor yet again is there one who loves better the products of the hen coop. And Cartersville isn't any different from any one of a hundred southern towns. When I was down there some time ago, a customer of mine who had a fancy for chickens and who had always had more or less trouble in maintaining ownership of them told me he had a remedy and asked me to go around with him and see it. I wanted him to tell me what it was, but he insisted on my seeing it first, so I went along with him, and in a few minutes was standing in his back yard where what was to me the oddest chicken coop I ever saw. It was constructed of large timbers and there were a dozen places in its walls where a hand could be run in and everything cleaned out within reach. Then there was no fastening on the door, nor was there any kind of protection to the fowls. I couldn't understand how such an inviting snap could be of any use to the owner and said as much.

"The charm is in the timber," said he.

"No," said I.

"Fact, just the same," said he. "You don't see it on the outside and you don't know it, but the darkies around here do, and they won't come within 100 yards of that coop if they can help it. I don't care how full of chickens it is. 'Cause why? It is built of the timbers of a gallows on which a man was hung about three months ago in another county. It cost me something extra to get it, but it has more than paid for itself since I have had it, and I am in the market now to buy all the secondhand scaffolds in Georgia. If you run across a sheriff any place with one for sale, let me know by next mail, won't you, please?"

"It was a true bill," concluded the traveling man, "for I saw a darky tried on it, and he refused a big silver dollar to go down to the coop to get a chicken for breakfast."—Washington Star.

TEAS AND TEAS.

Things Once Used or Now Used as Substitutes For the Chinese Herb.

Of course every one knows that we drink a good deal that isn't tea when we drink a cup of tea. We drink—or are supposed to drink—some tea, some lead and some straw. But there are several "teas" that the drinkers know are not made of tea leaves and yet are not adulterated.

In Peru they drink mate, a tea made from the Ilex paraguensis, a species of holly. This is the only mate tea, but there is a Brazilian tea, gorgonba, called mate there; another tea used in Austria, called Brazilian tea, and several other so called mate teas are made from different varieties of the Ilex. In Labrador they make a tea from two species of ledum. Oswego tea was made from the scarlet monarda, and mountain tea from the dwarf evergreen, Gaultheria procumbens. Then clover tea and tansy tea and catnip tea and mint tea are used, though not as beverages.

In Sumatra they use coffee leaves to make tea out of, and the beverage is said to be very refreshing. In Mauritius the leaves of an orchid, Angrocium fragrans, are used. The Tongueless have teas of their own, made of leaves, berries, barks and woods. The Abyssinians make tea out of the leaves of the Catha edulis. When a sentinel can't leave his post to get a cup of tea, he can chew a leaf or two of this plant, and he won't feel like going to sleep all night. In Tasmania there are said to be more than 200 substitutes for tea; in England they used to make a tea of sage, betony or rosemary and of raspberry leaves; in France they use black currant leaves and borage to make tea, and a century or so ago they gathered in English gardens and fields ash, elder and sloe leaves, and the leaves of white-thorn and blackthorn, out of which to make tea. So it is evident that there are teas and teas.—New York Sun.

Animals' Fright Is Short.

A question that has often been asked is, How long does fright last in a wild creature? The close observer will be surprised at its brief duration. They are not subject to "nerves" like human beings. A partridge after running (or rather flying) the gantlet of half a dozen guns—if we may be allowed a mixed metaphor—drops on the other side of a hedge and begins calmly to peck as if nothing had happened. You would think a rabbit after hearing a charge of shot whistling about its haunches and just managing to escape from a yelping spaniel would keep indoors for a week, but out it pops quite merrily as soon as the coast is clear. A fox pursued by hounds has been known to halt and kick a fowl in its flight, though we may assume that his enemies were not close to Reynard at the time. We have been led into thinking about the matter by noting what took place at a cover after being shot over.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Drying Clothes.

The drying of clothes in frosty weather is sometimes, in the case of delicate fabrics, attended with tearing because of the quick stiffening in the very cold air. A simple precaution which will prevent any such trouble is to dissolve three or four handfuls of coarse salt in the last rinsing water, thus making it, in fact, a weak brine. Articles so rinsed will not suffer from or stiffen with the cold.

The cheeks become pale from fear because the mental emotion diminishes the action of the heart and lungs and so impedes the circulation.

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