

THE HOMEBOUND HOST.

The sound of a host advancing,
Tramp tramp tramp
Under the windy flicker
And flare of the evening lamp.

Not to the clamor of bugles,
Nor to the stormy tread of drums,
Not to the battle's tocsin.

The pattering of tiny footfalls
That run to an open door,
The mother's tender singing,
Her step on the nursery floor.

This is the army's music,
Cheerily calls good-night,
The merry voice of the comrade
As he passes out of sight.

Under the windy flicker
And flare of the evening lamp
I hear a host advancing
With steady and resolute tramp.

A host of the strong and gentle,
A throng of the brave and true,
Dear little wives and mothers,
Hastening home to you.

—Margaret E. Sangster in Harper's Bazar

CAPTURING A SWORDFISH.

A Vicious Monster, Being Wounded Pierces a Block Island Boat.

A man stands on a little platform in front of the bow armed with a harpoon having a sharply and deeply barbed point, so that in piercing the fish, if it goes in far enough, it cannot be easily got out, let the fish be as ugly as he may.

It also enables the vessel to send out a life boat to haul in, tire out and, if possible, capture the ugly fellow. And ugly he is, if he is a young fish. If he is old and heavy, he is much quieter—even with a harpoon in him. It is the younger, livelier fellows that are so full of ugly courage—that attack and kill whales, and attack, indeed, pretty much everything in the ocean, unless it may be the sea serpent and the devil fish.

That they will attack a man, even a bather, who is in water not over his head, and kill him, too, unless he can make wonderful time in getting into shallower water, was proved a few years ago in the case of a young Catholic priest who was attacked while bathing on the California shore, in water just above his hips; he was fearfully gashed and nearly killed before he could get ashore. Sometimes, in its fury at being harpooned, it rushes at the small boat and thrusts its ugly sword up through the boat's bottom.

Our harpooner fastened to a fish that was secured, as it happened, with little trouble, though the harpoon only penetrated a little way into his gizzard. He proved to be 10 feet 5 inches long, and weighed undoubtedly 450 pounds. Much larger ones have been caught, but rarely. And it was with the second one that there was an exciting time. He proved to be "a young man" among his fellows, and an ugly young fellow, too.

Having him well harpooned, and the barrel going dancing at a great rate against the wind—for it is a curious and hitherto unrelated fact that a swordfish, when harpooned, always rushes off to windward—the life boat put out to secure him after duly "playing" him. In it went a Block Islander belonging to the vessel, and two courageous passengers. By the time they reached the barrel, they were a mile from the vessel, and could be seen, with a glass, pulling in on the line.

They worked the fish a good while. When a swordfish, finding himself harpooned and helplessly held, really gives up the fight, he suddenly turns and goes to leeward. The men at the line understand what that movement means. They were still "playing" this fellow, and ex-hausting him, when, having several times had him hauled in close to the boat, so that his blue figure was distinctly visible, and as often permitted him to go 100 feet off or more, something happened which caused the captain of the steam yacht a mile off, looking through his glass, to exclaim: "They're in trouble! he has struck the boat!"

He ordered an instant start for them. He was none too soon. The enraged fish, withdrawing some sixty feet, had made one of those arrowlike rushes upon the boat, which can be equaled in its velocity by no other fish in the sea. The sword pierced the bottom of the boat a little on one side of the keel, near the center—coming up nearly two feet. Fortunately men have learned ere now not to sit down in a boat engaged in hauling in a swordfish. By standing (as well as they can) their feet present a smaller surface, and hence a diminished chance of being hit. Last year one man's boot heel was partly hit, knocking him headlong.

In the present instance one of the men had a narrow escape of hardly ten inches. But the men were saved. Indeed, the boat, being a shell lifeboat, would hardly have sunk, although it was already half full of water and the men hard at work baling when the vicious fish was repeatedly lanced through the head and neck till he got comparatively quiet, when, in hauling him up the side, with the harpoon purchase at the shoulder and the long grappling hook at the tail, a slipknot was successfully got over his wide forked tail—and then—we had him. But for this last grip he would have turned the boat over. But the way he lashed the sea with that tail was a caution.—Hartford Times.

Another Cure for Insomnia. "So many cures for have been advocated for sleeplessness that I am tempted," writes a correspondent, "to propound my own recipe, which, if it may appear somewhat impracticable and far fetched, has at least the advantage of simplicity. It is merely this: When you have tumbled and tossed about one bed until your pillow seems to be on fire and your sheets red hot, turn into another—I mean another bed. You will find the sheets and the pillow refreshingly cool, and it is probable at all events that you will go to sleep. The recipe is not infallible, and it is of course necessary to have another bed to turn into, which is not always possible. But when practicable it is worth trying; and if it fails one can always fall back on the undoubted fact that there is no universal cure for sleeplessness. What is one man's meat is another man's poison."—Pall Mall Budget.

Hitting the Finger Nails. The wife of a well known iron operator in Pennsylvania is beautiful, witty and accomplished, but she bites her finger nails. She says she cannot help it. She acquired the habit in childhood, and has tried every means to break it up, but without success. At times she has succeeded in resisting the inclination until all her finger nails are triumphantly long, but invariably they disappear as if by magic the first time she is disturbed, annoyed or rendered nervous. She does not know when she bites them. She suddenly finds them all gone. Her doctors tell her the habit is incurable except for very strong willed phlegmatic persons.

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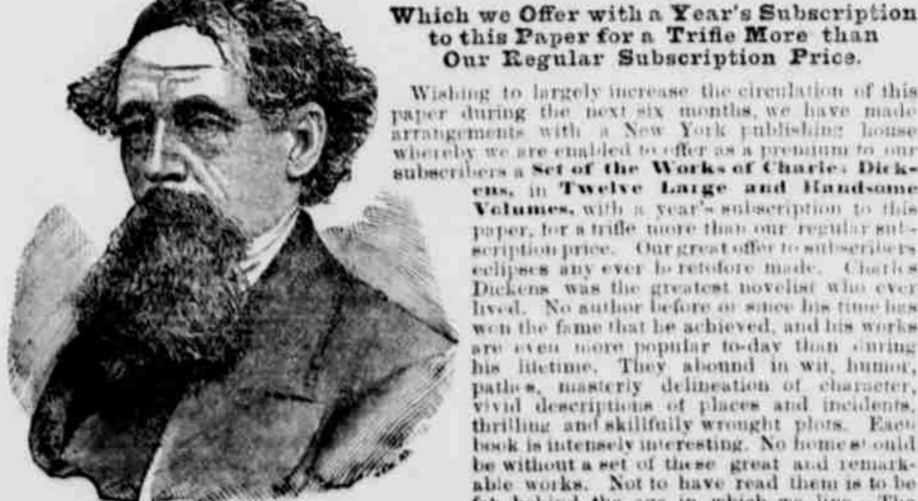
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