

HUNTING THE WHALE

DECAY OF A ONCE PROFITABLE INDUSTRY.

The Old Ships, Crews, and Implements Employed in the Industry that Formerly Enriched the New England Coast Towns—Perils of Whaling.

An Almost Forgotten Fish.
The city of New Bedford, Mass., recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary as a municipality. It is a typical New England city, whose people, with Yankee adaptiveness, have replaced the whaling industry—once its principal reliance—with many more modern business enterprises. The whaler, like the Indian, the cowboy and the logger, is a vanishing type of America. A century finds him relegated from among the foremost features of the New England seaboard to be an almost forgotten figure. The famous fortunes "down East" were built on a foundation of cetaceous blubber, and the wheels of prosperity were lubricated with spermaceti, but when the rock farms of Pennsylvania began, egg-shaped, to spout petroleum, the hollow roar sounded the death knell of the whaling industry. The keen Yankee, however, was equal to the emergency, and the millions that had accumulated through sperm oil were invested in manufacturing. The rusting harpoons were transformed to shining spindles, the tempest-tossed timbers of abandoned ships fed the glowing grates of new enterprises, romance of the sea fled away as the electric shadowed the astral lamp, but thrifty profit cheerily nestled in the embrasure of the old New England mantle trees, smiling at the ghostly memories and heroics of long ago.

Rare Old New Bedford.
What of the fleet of 400 whaling ships once registered from New Bedford, Nantucket, Gloucester and Provincetown? One would find only a few remnants of this glory to-day. New Bedford, indeed, is one of the largest manufacturing centers of the East, but Nantucket is merely an exhibition stand for tourists after a "dip" or in search of colonial curios, while Provincetown is a sleepy point at land's end. Down at the moss-grown wharves of New Bedford there is an aggregation of queer old ships, floating monuments of the ancient fleet. There they lie, in their quiet reservations, hoary in age, linked in pairs, as though to keep up the old form of "gam" (whaler's gossip) and look in mild rebuke at the wheezy, impudent little tugs that bustle about the harbor aggressively attached to large and lazy ships that are coming from or going to foreign shores. These old heroes, that were once the pride and glory of American seamen when our flag floated in every port on the globe, are freighted with rare romance and curious in contrast with the craft of to-day. The largest of them did not measure over 125 feet, or exceed 500 gross tonnage. Take the old Commodore Morris as a type. She was built in 1841; tonnage, 338.21; length, 107; beam, 27; depth, 17. The quaint old figurehead is battered almost beyond recognition, but may take pride in the fact that it cleared \$200,000 for owners in a brief commission.

The Whaleship Structurally.
Their bows, broad, round, are heavily timbered, ornate with curious carving, and their sterns are straight and square, giving an ungainly look; yet these old ships have boldly battered arctic ice and scorched under the "line." They have sailed in every sea, roving in unending commission, until their water casks were filled with oil. Notwithstanding the Standard Oil Co., venturesome whalers still sail into New Bedford, and unload their cargoes on the ancient wharves, where barrels and barrels are waiting a favorable market, protected from the weather by masses of dried seaweed packed about them. Sperm oil is now 38 cents per gallon; it used to command from \$1 to \$1.50. Two old whaleships came sailing into New Bedford recently—the Rising Sun, odoriferous with oil, after a three-month cruise, and the Dolphin, packed with whalebone, after a cruise of thirty-three months around Cape Horn. The Rising Sun will serve as a type. The distinctive architectural feature of her deck forward was the big brick furnace inclosing the oil try pots. A fire inspector might call it a "target," but whalers, soaked as they are with oil, and, when trying out blubber, the roll of the ship seeming to send flames up to the masthead, seldom burn—a fact due only to the most extraordinary caution, the wooden water backing about the furnace being kept constantly filled. The cook's galley was no larger than a doghouse, and did not admit of that functionary standing up while at his labors.



PERILS OF THE CHASE.

The master, Captain Taylor, extended an invitation to go into the cabin. The steps inclined at 90 degrees and were very slippery; so we descended on the air line, so to speak. The little room was about seven by eight feet, with three open berths on a side and a small folding table in the center. Things were neat enough, and lockers all about the sides and under the berths showed where things not in use were preserved. A trap door in the floor opened into the lazarette, where the table delicacies were stored.

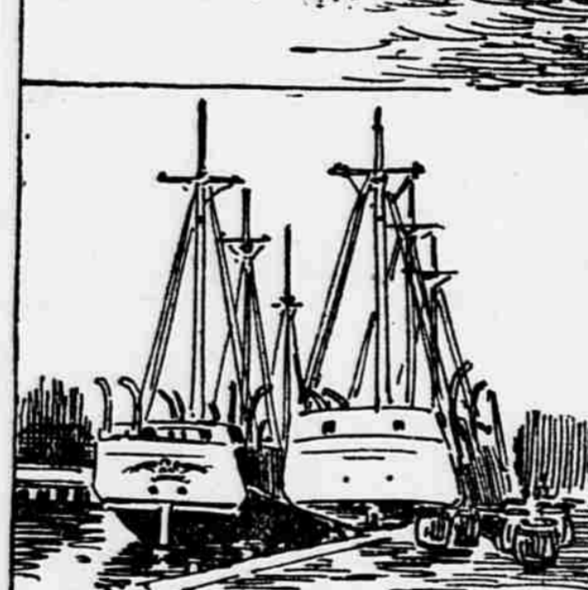
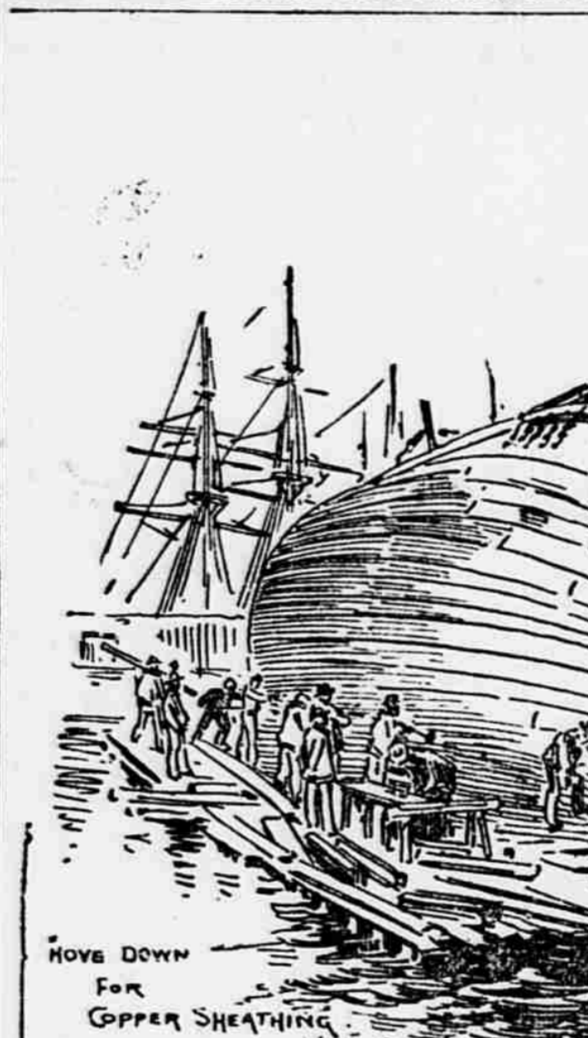
In the Captain's Cabin.
The captain's wife, a delicate and refined little woman, had made a number of voyages with him, and found this cabin quite comfortable. The apartment was roomy and distinctly "swell" compared to the forecabin, up in the bow, where the sailors smoked and slept and spun their yarns. They were packed in like sardines. Only a limited supply of light and air can get through the little hatch,

which is sealed up in rough weather. How over a score of men can live and keep healthy and happy in this dark and reek-some hole for months or years is a mystery.

A whaler's crew usually enlists from twenty-four to thirty men, each man on his "lay," for they all share in a percentage of the profit—the first mate, 1 in 24; the second mate, 1 in 30; the others sharing down, according to rank, the figures varying with the market and the size of the ship. There are four mates, a steward, a cook, a cooper, ordinary seamen and green hands—the last getting the drudgery and the light "lay." The latter are out for "experience," and they generally get it in large, unvarnished quantity.

It is estimated that it requires \$30,000 to fit for a long voyage, as every emergency must be anticipated and provided for—say a period of three years. Into the hold are packed 150 barrels of salt beef, seventy-five barrels of salt pork, thirty barrels of ship biscuit, thirty or forty barrels of flour, 300 gallons of molasses, 200 pounds of coffee, 200 pounds of tea, 500 pounds of sugar, equal quantities of rice, meal, beans, dried apples, hams, butter, raisins, cheese, canned goods, vinegar, and food staples. The new oil casks are filled with fresh water, and there are quantities of oak and pine staves, headings and iron hoops, with a thousand and one things, from paint and tar to pills and gunpowder, in the spare supplies.

The Whaleboat.
The conspicuous equipment of the whaler is the sharp, double-proved boats that hang from awkward looking wooden davits, one on the larboard and two or three on the starboard side. The Yankees that



NEW BEDFORD RELICS OF A GREAT AND HEROIC INDUSTRY.

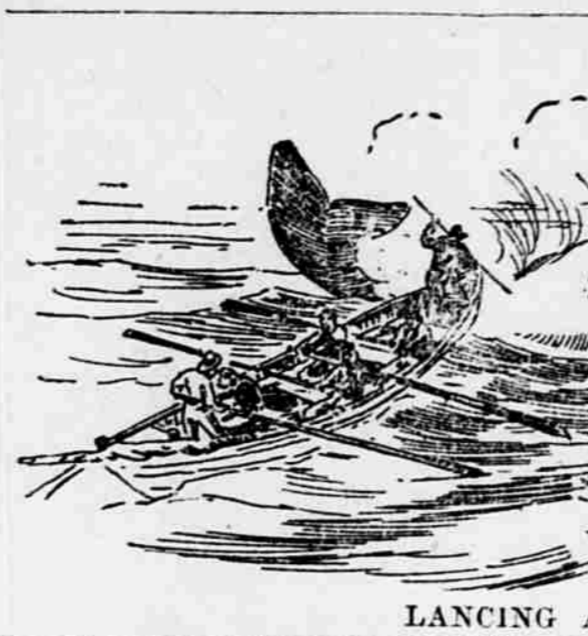
devised this craft built for speed, stability and buoyancy. These twenty-four-foot boats, stepped for a mast, and arranged for six oarsmen, with platforms at each end for lancer and steersman, have brought more wealth from the nether world of the deep than can be computed. Aside from their complete equipment their distinctive furnishing is a tub, where spirally coiled in concentric layers, or sheaves, is the whale line. This line is a manila rope, two-thirds of an inch in thickness, and measures something over 200 fathoms. This line is attached to the harpoon, and the other end is unattached, first, as a matter of safety; second, for fastening to a second line should the whale "sound" so deep as to take up the entire length of line. (Scoresby records an instance where the quantity of line withdrawn from the different boats engaged in the capture of one whale amounted to 10,400 yards, or nearly six English miles.) The upper end

fermine had a great porpoise grant from the crown, serving and seasoning the meat like veal balls. Zogoranda, an old-time doctor, recommended strips of blubber for infants as very juicy and nutritious. In the case of a small sperm whale the brains are accounted a fine dish by epicures. The scraps of blubber are called "fritters" and taste like pork cracklings; on the whalers, however, they are used for feeding the flames that try out the oil. Whalers wrecked in Greenland have been known to subsist upon moldy scraps of blubber that had been left ashore, which is a tribute to their nourishing quality, in a pinch.

The Powerful Lower Jaw.
The lower jaw can be unrigged by a practical artist and hoisted on deck for the purpose of extracting the ivory teeth that the sailors decorate with India ink designs, and the hard, white whalebone that they fashion into canes and whip handles during their long days of inactivity. There are forty-two teeth, those in old whales much worn down, but never decayed.

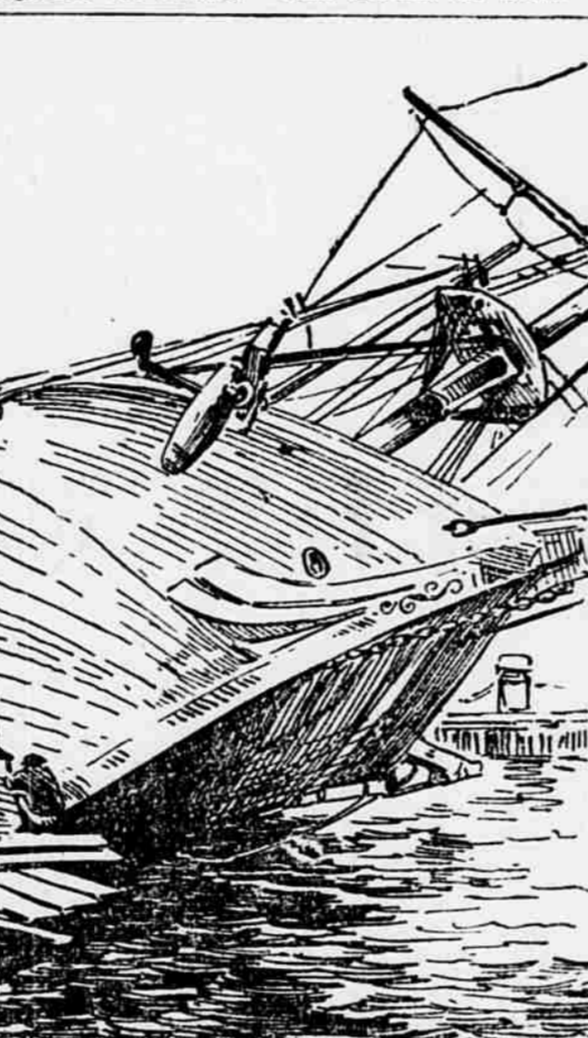
One of the darkest tragedies of the ocean resulted from a whale sinking the whaleship Essex, Nov. 16, 1819. The infuriated monster first struck the ship just forward the forechairs, with a tremendous shock that started her butts. The fated ship was settling when the whale returned and struck her under the cathead, and completely stove in her bows. Some of the survivors of the crew drifted in open boats for three months, their lives being sustained by cannibalism. As for the head of the right whale look at that hanging lip; what a mammoth snail and pout! By measuring it is twenty feet long and five feet deep, and will yield you some 500 gallons of oil or more. The roof of the mouth is about twelve feet high, and runs up to a sharp angle, like a ridge pole; while these ribbed, arched, hairy sides present us with those wonderful vertical scimiter-shaped slats of whalebone, say 300 on a side, which, depending

from the upper part of the crown bone, form flexible Venetian blinds. The edges of these are fringed with hairy fibers, through which he strains the water, and in whose intricacies he retains the small fish, when open-mouthed he goes through seas of brit (a minute yellow substance upon which the right whale largely feeds) in feeding time off the famous Brazil banks. The colonades of bone so methodically arranged resemble a pipe organ. For a carpet to this organ is a tongue that the bold voracious sharks occasionally snatch



LANCING A WHALE.

—sometimes when the tormented whale is alive—before the whaler can convert it into five barrels of oil (whalebone commands from \$3 to \$6 per pound). The right whale has two external spout holes on top of his head, the sperm whale only one. The great battering ram of the sperm whale's head yields his most precious oily vintage, the highly prized



NEW BEDFORD RELICS OF A GREAT AND HEROIC INDUSTRY.

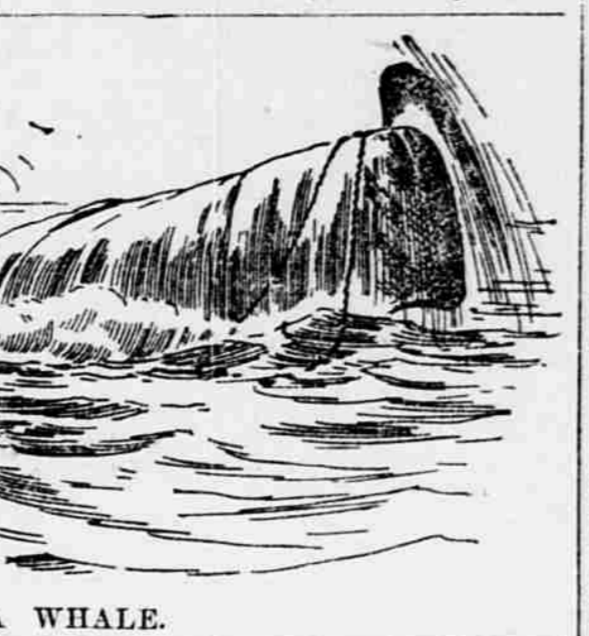
spermaceti in its pure limpid and odoriferous state; nor is this precious substance found unalloyed in any other part of the creature. A large whale's "case" yields 500 gallons of sperm. In a whale twenty-five feet long the head is about twenty-six feet long. One may assume that the blubber is the epidermis; it has something of the consistency of close-grained beef, but tougher, more elastic, and compact, and ranges from eight to ten, or even fifteen inches in thickness. In the case of a large sperm whale there will be a blubber yield of 100 barrels of oil. When one considers that this only represents three-fourths of the entire coat, and that ten barrels to the ton is a fair allotment, one may guess that a whale weighs as much as a small locomotive.

Sperm Whale's Characteristics.
The sperm whale, like other leviathans but unlike other fish, breeds indifferently at all seasons. Again it is warm-blooded and requires air to fill the lungs. The inhaling is done through the spiracle or hole in the top of his head; not through his mouth, which is eight feet below the sur-

face when the big fish comes up to "blow" and inhale; something like an hourly process.

Aside from the wide expanding and massive jaw of the sperm whale his tail is his powerful arm of defense. To begin with, at that point where it tapers to the girth of a man, it comprises on its upper surface an area of fifty square feet; the compact body of its root expanding into two broad flukes, shoaling away to less than an inch in thickness. The entire member is a webbed bed of wedged sinews, with subtle elasticity and amazing strength, that sends the owner through the sea like a flash, flourishes gloriously graceful in the sunshine as he dives, or deals out death in a stroke when viciously aiming at a whaleboat (hurling boats

with their entire crews into the air as a juggler tosses up a ball). When a whale has succumbed to lancing and dyed the sea with spouting blood the huge body is towed to the ship and large chains are put about the head and flukes to hold the body fast. Enormous tackles are swung up to the main top, and firmly lashed to the lower mast head, the strongest point above the ship's deck, to the end of a hawser-like rope. Winding through the intricacies is the blubber hook, weighing a hundred pounds. The blubber envelopes a whale like a rind does an orange, and as the ship careens to the strain of the tackle fixed to the heaving windlass, the hook takes hold and following the line scarf made by the keen cutting spades, the great body rolls over as strip after strip of the blood-dripping blubber is pulled aloft and lowered through the mainhatch to the blubber room. There it is cut up by double-handed knives, and passed up to the deck to be tried out in the smoking brick furnaces, with wooded water backs about their base.



Edged Tools of the Whaler.
The whaling spade, like all the lancing and cutting equipment, is of the best steel, is kept as sharp as possible and is honed like a razor. This spade is about as large as a man's spread hand, and has a socket in which is a pole handle twenty feet long. These edged tools are kept in canvas pockets, lined with wool.

One of the most profitable and curious products derived from the sperm whale is ambergris (gray amber), a morbid secretion of the liver or intestines. It is a solid opaque inflammable substance, lighter than water, having the consistency of wax, and having when heated a fragrant odor. It is highly soluble in alcohol, and is used particularly as the holding base of perfume, and was once considered as having great medicinal properties as an aphrodisiac, and for spicing wines. It is sometimes obtained from post-mortems on diseased whales, or found floating on the water in the neighborhood of the Bahamas in masses of from sixty to 225 pounds. Ambergris of the best grade is now quoted at \$27 per ounce. Chas. E. Nixon, in the Chicago Inter Ocean.

AN ABSENT-MINDED MAN.

Results of a Learned Professor Losing Himself in Realms of Thought.
"When I was younger than I will ever be again," said the professor with a three-story head and eyeglasses of telescopic power, "I was the victim of such intense mental abstraction that I removed myself entirely from the world of practical affairs. I was in the boundless realms of thought and paid but fleeting attention to the active field of human action. It was necessary to notify me when I should attend my class, eat my meals, and even when I should retire."
"I was at one time requested to lecture in a Western village, and agreed to do so. The theme was one that had received my best thoughts, and the mere prospect of delivering it was a physical pleasure. When I arrived at the depot my thoughts were concentrated upon the proposed address. I realized that my train was an hour late and that I must hurry, but beyond the mere fact of hurrying I did not grasp a detail."
"Drive fast," I shouted to the driver of a dingy-looking vehicle as I sprang in and handed him a \$5 bill. "Spare neither horse nor whip."
"Away we went with a plunge. The carriage rolled like a ship in the trough of the sea. Street lights seemed a torchlight procession moving rapidly the other way. Constables shouted, dogs, barked, small boys chased us, and business ceased that people might stand on the sidewalk and gaze. Up one street and down another we dashed madly. We took corners on two wheels, grazed telegraph poles and knocked over such movables as ash barrels and dry goods boxes."
"After half an hour of this bewildering experience I stuck my head from the window and shouted: 'Are we nearly there?'"
"Where did yez want to go, sor?" came the edifying answer.

The Oldest Plow Maker.

Chicago has the oldest plow-maker in the United States. His name is David Bradley, and he is at the head of a big manufacturing company on the West Side. Mr. Bradley first worked at the business in Syracuse, N. Y., in 1832. In 1835 he came to Chicago, which then numbered about 2,500 inhabitants and a camp of several thousand Indians, to help erect the first iron-foundry established here. Mr. Bradley was the first man to bring pig-iron into Chicago. In connection with the foundry which he helped build was a machine-shop, and the establishment soon began along with its other business the manufacture of plows. Mr. Bradley, by the growth of his business, was finally forced to build a little town of his own, which is known as Bradley, Ill. Mr. Bradley has passed his 85th birthday, but is still hale and hearty, and thoroughly enjoys the prosperity which hard work has brought him. The active business has been surrendered to his sons.—Chicago Tribune.

Where Duels Are Fought.

More duels are fought in Germany than in any other country. Most of them, however, are student duels, which culminate in nothing more serious than slashed cheeks or torn scalps. Of all German university towns, little Jena and Göttingen are most devoted to the code. In Göttingen the number of duels average one a day, year in and year out. On one day, several years ago, twelve duels were fought in Göttingen in twenty-four hours. In Jena the record for one day in recent times is twenty-one. Fully 4,000 student duels are fought every year in the German Empire. In addition to these there are the more serious duels between officers and civilians. Among Germans of mature years the annual number of duels is about 100.

Streets in Big Cities.

London has 1,380 miles of streets; Paris, 600 miles, and New York 575 miles.

Hot Water Woman's Friend.

Hot water is woman's best friend if she drinks hot water an hour before her breakfast she will be able to ward off dyspepsia. If she drinks hot water flavored with lemon and sweetened with sugar when she has been out in the cold she will ward off chills. The same agreeable medicine taken early enough in the progress of a cold will stop it.

When a nervous headache makes the forehead throbb and back of the neck ache, hot water will relieve the pain. Sufferers from sleeplessness find themselves deliciously drowsy after a hot bath. Wrinkles flee before it, and blackheads vanish before its constant use. Great is hot water.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

The Usual Way.

Mrs. Bongtong (proud mother of the accomplished girl graduate)—I hope, Alice, that you addressed that French count in his native tongue. What did he say in reply?
Alice—He apologized and said he was sorry, but he understood nothing but French.—Boston Traveler.

THE FIRST PRAYER.

Initial Invocation Delivered Before the American Congress.

It does not matter who the member of Congress was who was doing the talking, but he is one that is supposed to know as little about religion as he knows much about politics. "Don't be alarmed about me," he said to three or four correspondents the other day, during a passing visit to the capital, "but I've got something you haven't thought of in a thousand years, and I'm going to read it to you. It may remind you of our very dear and good old friend, Chaplain Milburn, but that's no harm. What I have here is a copy of the first prayer ever delivered in Congress. I found it in an issue of Thatcher's 'Military Journal,' bearing date of 1777, and it is credited to Rev. Jacob Duché, rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, who subsequently proved traitorous to the noble cause of independence. The prayer is as follows:

"Oh Lord, our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings and Lord of hosts, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers on earth and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all the kingdoms, empires and governments, look down in mercy, we beseech thee, on these American States, who have fled to thee from the rod of the oppressors, and thrown themselves on thy gracious protection, desiring to henceforth be dependent only on thee; to thee they have appealed for the righteousness of their cause; to thee do they now look up for that countenance and support which thou alone canst give; take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under thy nurturing care; give them wisdom in council and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries; convince them of the unrighteousness of their cause; and, if they still persist in their sanguinary purposes, oh let the voice of thine own unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop the weapons of war from their unnerve hands in the day of battle. Be thou present, O God of wisdom, and direct the counsels of this honorable assembly; enable them to settle things on the best and surest foundation, that the scene of blood may be speedily closed; that order, harmony and peace may be effectually restored, and truth and justice, religion and piety, prevail and flourish among thy people. Preserve the health of their bodies and the vigor of their minds; shower down on them and the millions they represent such temporal blessings as thou seest expedient for them in this world, and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy son, our Savior, Amen."—Washington Star.

The Elephant Minded the Baby.

Some time before an elephant hunt my husband was at a station in Bengal. His work kept him out nearly all day, and, being ill, I used to lie for hours in a long garden chair on the veranda, too weak to read or enjoy any more exciting amusement than my eyes supplied to me. We had three elephants for our tents and baggage; and one dear creature used to feed from my hands every day and seemed as gentle as a pet dog or cat. One of our government chaprasis was particularly devoted to her and invariably shared his meal of fruit or flower cakes with his dumb friend. On a particularly hot day the chaprasi, to my surprise, placed his tiny child of six months at the elephant's feet, warning her expressively that the infant was in her charge and was to be cared for till his return. I myself was an eye-witness of her wonderful sagacity. Large banana trees and fig trees grew around, and to my surprise the elephant broke off one of the former's spreading leaves, held it like a fan in her trunk, and from time to time gracefully waved it over the slumbering child, whether to temper the heat of the atmosphere or to keep off flies I am unable to say. The gentle way in which she moved her feet over the child and across to each side astonished me. I sent for a white loaf and some oranges, and calling her by name (she was never chained) tried in vain to tempt her to my side on the low veranda. Nothing would induce her to leave her charge. The warm air and the monotonous wave of the swinging fan overpowered me with drowsiness to which I yielded; and after a sleep of some duration I was awakened by quiet, subdued snorts beside me. To my surprise I found that the chaprasi had just returned to his offspring, and the elephant stood near the veranda beside me, patiently waiting and gently asking for the tempting dainties so bravely withstood for over two hours.

Hot Water Woman's Friend.

Hot water is woman's best friend if she drinks hot water an hour before her breakfast she will be able to ward off dyspepsia. If she drinks hot water flavored with lemon and sweetened with sugar when she has been out in the cold she will ward off chills. The same agreeable medicine taken early enough in the progress of a cold will stop it.

When a nervous headache makes the forehead throbb and back of the neck ache, hot water will relieve the pain. Sufferers from sleeplessness find themselves deliciously drowsy after a hot bath. Wrinkles flee before it, and blackheads vanish before its constant use. Great is hot water.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

The Usual Way.

Mrs. Bongtong (proud mother of the accomplished girl graduate)—I hope, Alice, that you addressed that French count in his native tongue. What did he say in reply?
Alice—He apologized and said he was sorry, but he understood nothing but French.—Boston Traveler.