

THE SHARK'S HABITS.

EX-CONSUL NICHOLAS PIKE'S OPINIONS AND OBSERVATIONS.

As Many as 100 Seen at a Time in the Indian Ocean—Hooking a Couple of Specimens—Several Thrilling Incidents.

Col. Nicholas Pike, formerly United States consul at Porto, Portugal, and later on the island of Mauritius, in the Indian ocean, is a well known authority in natural history. Calling at his residence one evening recently I said:

"You must have had some interesting encounters with sharks, I presume, during your natural history researches in the Indian ocean?"

"Yes," he replied, "that region swarms with them. Many of them are exceedingly dangerous and they grow to be very large, some being taken twenty-seven feet in length. They generally remain near the bottom, coming to the surface only in search of prey. At points along the coast of the Sea Shell group of islands I have seen as many as 100 sharks at one time through the clear water. Once a number of English naval officers and myself thought we would engage in a shark hunt. We procured a number of strong lines, hooks and pieces of raw pork. In order to make sure of the sharks coming to the surface we took with us a pair of bullock's blood, and when we reached the locality most frequented by the voracious animals we emptied the contents of the pail upon the surface of the water. We got more than we bargained for. The sharks came about us in swarms. The blood seemed to make them ferocious and they would stick their heads up out of the water, apparently looking for the animal that was bleeding. We were frightened out of our wits and pulled for shore. Frequently we had to stop and beat them off with our oars, fearing that they would tip the boat over. They followed us even into shoal water, and when we landed we fired at them with our revolvers.

A COUPLE OF SHARKS.

"I had an excellent opportunity to study the habits of the shark while at Mauritius," said Col. Pike, "because I then made a complete collection of the fish of the Indian ocean. When the Duke of Edinburgh came to Port Louis on one of his cruises he expressed a desire to see a specimen of a real man eating shark, and I volunteered one day to capture one. Accordingly I took my boat and a Malay crew and set out. I was particular to take a boat without any keel, because sharks will dart under a boat and tear off a keel without half trying. Besides lines, hooks and bait, I carried a whaleman's spade. This is an instrument shaped like a carpenter's chisel, but as big as your hand and fixed on a pole say ten feet long. Thus equipped we proceeded to the outer reef off Port Louis. Reaching deep water we threw out our lines baited with chunks of pork. The ocean was perfectly calm, and after waiting some time I took a pull on one of the lines and found that it was fastened to something. Then there was a fierce jerk from the other end which nearly careened the boat.

"I knew that we had hooked one and almost simultaneously the other lines were made taut, and I could see we were to have our hands full. The shark first hooked now became fierce and was thrashing and slashing about in the most threatening manner. I seized my whaleman's spade and stood erect in the bow of the boat. He was coming direct for us with his mouth wide open. When within range I made a fierce lunge at him, which fortunately severed the vertebra and the huge fish keeled over on its side. The second one was not so easily dispirited, and when we saw he was killing his prey was resting on the side of the boat, having made a spring out of the water in attacking us. The third one we maneuvered with for over an hour before we could kill it. One of the sharks measured twenty-two feet, and its liver made a barrel of oil. The three, after being exhibited at Port Louis, were stuffed and sent to Professor Agassiz and are now in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Cambridge, Mass.

GREEDY FISH EATERS.

All the meat that was brought to Port Louis came in vessels and the cattle were lowered into the water and made to swim ashore. It was not an uncommon thing for the sharks to seize a live animal and make away with it. In order to study the habits of this wonderful fish more thoroughly, I once took a dead bullock and anchored it in the parts most frequented by them. I then waited to see how they would pull him to pieces. They would go off some distance and then swim swiftly toward the bullock tearing great circular pieces out of the haunches. In one hour there was not a single vestige of the bullock left. So intent were they upon their prey that they allowed me to put a noose around their tails and drag them on the reef, where we killed them. Three specimens captured in this way were sent to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

Once there were two men off the coast of Mauritius in a pirogue, or what we would call a dugout. A ravenous shark seemed determined to have them, and finally succeeded in turning the boat over. The men drew their clasp knives and tried to defend themselves, but one of them was swallowed by the fish without an apparent effort, and, strange to say, he did not then seem to be satisfied. The people on the shore who had witnessed this tragic event determined to capture the monster, and, accordingly, they killed a kid and fastened it to a hook. For a time the shark swam around it, apparently suspecting something, but finally swallowed it and the delighted natives hauled him ashore. The fish was opened and I saw the body of the man, which was taken out, and have the knife which he held in his hand.

Masters of whaling vessels have told me that they have known sharks to jump out of the water and take pieces of meat which were suspended from the ship's side. The ship Ellen Wallace was anchored in the harbor of Port Louis at one time and a sailor asked permission of the captain to go ashore, overboard, and accordingly jumped. He was refused, determined to swim ashore. He was swallowed by a shark before he had covered half the distance. I also saw his body taken out of the fish.—Brooklyn Eagle.

A Wedding Superstition.

A curious superstition was brought out during the performance of the marriage ceremony in a justice's office in Omaha. The magistrate had recommended the contracting parties to stand before him, and was about to begin the ceremony when a woman rushed in and ordered the judge to stop a moment. The women, who proved to be the bride's mother, looked at the carpet on the floor, and said: "Judge, I am a little superstitious. Which way do the cracks run in this floor?" This was a puzzle for the judge; but, being of an accommodating spirit, he ripped up about two yards of the carpet beneath his feet and found that the seams of the floor ran crosswise of the feet of the young couple he was about to unite. The position of the bride and groom was changed. The old lady gave a sigh of relief and the ceremony proceeded.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

IN THE SHAMEFACED LAND.

Coreans the Shyest Nation on Earth—Seclusion of the Fair Sex.

The Coreans are the shyest nation on the face of the earth. Until quite lately they have abstained as much as possible from all intercourse with strangers, holding studiously aloof not only from Europeans who have sought their hospitality, but also from contact with the Chinese and Japanese. Within the last few years, however, their reserve has shown signs of thawing, and we are at last able to form some opinion as to the reasons of their shyness, and to judge whether a closer acquaintance will reveal anything worth knowing. As to the first point, this shyness seems constitutional. There is a limit to it; for, like most shy people, the Coreans are not incurious.

A Dutch craft was wrecked near the coast of Corea in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and the sailors, whose narrative may be read in several books of old travel, found themselves the object of much inquisitive observation. Even the women and children were eager to see the outlandish navigators; more especially as the Dutchmen were reputed to be of a monstrous race who, when they drank, were obliged to twist their long noses round their ears. No such report heralded the journey which Mr. Carles made into the interior, yet he was received with polite attention and interest everywhere. "The more I have seen," he says, "of the Coreans, the more fully have I appreciated their politeness toward their guests and the dignity of their behavior." But he saw next to nothing of the women of the country, by whom he was carefully avoided. Even some little girls whom he found swinging in a field fled at his first approach. His inability to tell us about the women of Corea is especially to be regretted on account of the strange position they hold.

The seclusion of women in this land of the shamefaced is carried to the utmost limit. Ladies out of doors wear a green mantle which covers the whole countenance except the eyes. Nor do they willingly let even their eyes be seen. "It seemed odd," says Mr. Carles, "that each woman we met should have arrived at that moment at her home; but, as we learned later on, women have a right of entree everywhere, and to avoid us they turned into the nearest house at hand." Other travelers recount that the women are taught to shun the opposite sex from their earliest girlhood. They are even exhorted to talk as little as may be to their own husbands. What is still more extraordinary is the innate modesty of the men. This sentiment impels them to work in jacket and trousers in the hottest weather; while the richer classes use a kind of bamboo bracelet to keep the clothes, otherwise unbearable, from contact with the skin. When an Italian prince visited Corea, a few years ago, officials were sent to his ship to protest against the indecency of the Italian sailors, which for some days had prevented the villagers from leaving their houses. The sailors had been bathing.—St. James' Budget.

Cultivating "Unconscious Grace."

A new Boston cult that is just making its appearance here, is what is called a "tight class," which has no reference whatever to the effects of alcohol. These classes are trained by a young woman, who is the exponent of the Delsarte theory in America, and who has been through a course of training under Mlle. Delsarte, in Paris. The theory is that as the whole body is but an instrument of the mind, every part and member needs to be trained to the most perfect freedom. Not one person in a hundred can make a gesture with the unconscious grace of a child or an animal, for "the simple reason that an arbitrary volition is so impacted in each muscle that one controls every sinew artificially without knowing it." The idea of these "tight classes" is to break up this artificial control, and they derive the name from the fact that they wear tight while practicing, which is done under the eye of the young female exponent of the art.

Miss Stebbins has trained hospital nurses who declare that they have gained such suppleness of movement and control of their bodies that they are far more efficient and can do their work with less fatigue to themselves. But as usual the society girls in Boston were the ones who devoted themselves to this new art. They have no end of time and money to throw away and must have something new to amuse themselves with. So they have donned the close fitting costume, and "unconscious grace," "leopard movements" and "panther freedom" are the very latest necessity to any young woman who objects to considering herself a contemporary of Adam. The effect is very interesting.—New York World.

Sea Water a Pest Carrier.

We find in The New York Medical Journal that Dr. J. J. Kinyoun, assistant surgeon in the marine hospital service, who has done much of the bacteriological work that has proved so valuable in the detection of Asiatic cholera in obscure stages, both in the late importations at New York and for future cases, has made another important demonstration with respect to the persistence of bacterial life in the sea water of the bay, contaminated by the sewage of a population of 3,000,000. The existing contaminations developed by the end of five days colonies of bacteria ranging from 4,500 to 11,700 micro organisms per cubic centimeter of water from various points in the bay. Specimens of sea water, thoroughly sterilized and inoculated with pure cultivations of the spirilla of Asiatic cholera, proved that for sixty-nine days the spirilla could be derived from that medium and their characteristic growth produced by cultivation. They were found to be not only kept alive, but greatly increased in numbers. It is inferred that infection discharged into our tide or sea water is by no means disposed of, but remains a real menace to our own lives, as the contiguous shores afford every condition favorable to its development from the rising and falling tide. The ban of water pollution extends even to the land's end wherever the pernicious system of water carriage of excreta is followed.—Sanitary Era.

Whittier's "Barbara Frietche."

Some of the relatives of the late Barbara Frietche in Frederick, Md., recently sent to Mr. John G. Whittier, who immortalized the venerable lady in verse, a number of table articles which formerly belonged to Mrs. Frietche. Mr. Whittier acknowledged the receipt of the articles some days ago, and stated in his letter that he had become convinced that his poem entitled "Barbara Frietche" was based upon a supposed incident that had no foundation, but that he was glad to know, nevertheless, that she was a royal woman.—Chicago Herald.

Closing the Oyster's Shell.

A device has been patented to keep the shell of the oyster closed from the time it is captured until it is opened and set before an epicure 1,000 miles away. It is a simple piece of wire twisted around the oyster shell with a pair of pinners and then sealed. Close an oyster's mouth and he will preserve himself for weeks—three months is the time claimed. Oysters were recently locked up this way and sent to Denver, where they were opened and found to be of an excellent flavor.—Home Journal.

HARMLESS ACCIDENTS

WHICH ARE NOTABLY INTERESTING TO RAILROAD PATRONS.

Narrow Escapes and Unaccountable Mishaps Never Before Reported—Lost Driving Wheels—Wrecked Locomotive—A Switchman's Mistake.

Curious accidents happen on railroads. Because they are not attended with loss of life the public never hears of them, and yet they are so strange that most people will be inclined to believe they never happened or could happen.

Some time last summer one of these happened near Rock Island, within 100 miles of Chicago. A passenger train was running at full speed across a rather level piece of country. The train was probably making sixty miles an hour when, without any pronouncement whatever, all four of the driving wheels suddenly left the engine and went spinning off across the fences into the adjoining fields. Why they did it nobody knows to the present day; but they did it, and toward a station in a northern Wisconsin town. The baggage man and one of the other trainmen were standing in the door of the baggage car looking out, as such men often do, at a village as they pass through it. Just before they reached the station they were surprised to see alongside of the track a wrecked locomotive. It had been going in the same direction they were going, and they saw at once that a wreck had been very recent. It was not, however, until they pulled up at the station that they discovered the engine was the one that had been pulling their own train. It seems it had exploded, jumped the track and fallen in the ditch a complete wreck, without disturbing the remainder of the train, and it all happened so silently that, while they were only the second car from the engine, they had not heard the explosion or the crash it made when it left the track.

A WRECKED LOCOMOTIVE.

A very strange accident occurred on the Chicago and Ohio road. The train was running down grade at a rapid rate of speed in the West Virginia coal district, when it plunged into a mass of soft earth and rocks that had fallen down the mountain side on to the track. The concussion, while not so abrupt, was sufficient to throw the locomotive from the rails, and it rolled over into the river. The rebound snapped the pin connecting the tender and the baggage car, and the former shot forward, jumped clear over the debris, landed safely on the rails, and was found at the foot of the grade, three miles from the wrecked engine. The automatic brakes held the remainder of the train, not a wheel of which left the track. Another engine was telegraphed for, and the train went into Louisville on time. None of the passengers was any the wiser for their miraculous escape. The engineer and fireman went down with the engine, and both swam ashore. Barring a little shaking up and a cold bath, they were none the worse for their night's adventure, and proceeded westward with the train.

President Strong, of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad, had a close call once on the Atlantic and Pacific single road. He was en route to San Francisco and was traveling in a private car. A small single span deck bridge had burned out during the night, leaving the rails suspended. They were pinioned at either end by the ordinary bolts and splice bars, and the heat had warped them until they resembled the phonetic alphabet in shape. The train was running in the neighborhood of a mile a minute when it struck the warped rails, and heaven only knows what held it up, but they passed over all right, with only a slight damage to the car. Probably the terrific rate of speed at which the train was flying saved the lives of all on board.

TWO NARROW ESCAPES.

Two very narrow escapes from smash up have recently happened to the limited trains running east from Chicago, and both occurred not very long ago. The first happened within the first 100 miles out from this city to the train going east. It was to meet a freight at a long siding out on a prairie, mid-way between stations. The freight ran into the siding in ample time to be out of the way of the flying "limited," and one of the brakemen got off and went forward to the switch to be ready to open it as soon as the train had gone by. He was very tired and sleepy from some snoring that had taken place on the switch beam, and almost immediately fell asleep. He was almost as quickly awakened by the thundering of the approaching train. Why he did it he does not know to this day, but in his confusion he reached for the switch and turned it. Both engineers had their eyes fixed on the switch, as their custom is, and both in an instant saw the danger that threatened them. The one on the flying "limited" quickly reversed his engine and set his brakes, while the one on the freight turned on a full head of steam to force his train backward. The brakeman also saw the danger as quickly as they did, but not quickly enough to correct his terrible mistake, and he had only time to jump to one side, to fall rather than scramble out of the way, when the passenger passed the switch and turned into the siding full on the freight. When the switchman recovered he found that the two engines had gone together, but with force enough to only slightly damage their pilots. One of the engineers had jumped from his train after doing all he could to save it, and was slightly injured, but was able to take his position in the cab and proceed on his journey. The passengers probably do not know to this day why the train was stopped so suddenly.

The Parson and the Mashie.

The other afternoon an offensively fresh tragedian of the barnstorming variety jostled and spoke insolently to a pretty young woman who was being escorted up Broadway by a stalwart and serious looking middle aged man in ministerial garb. Promptly and silently the escort resented the deliberate and premeditated insult by knocking her insulter into a snow bank. The fellow got up cursing, and was instantly knocked down again. The crowd cheered the parson and booed the victim of his scientific fist, who slunk off like a whipped dog to have the mud brushed off his fur collared coat. As for his reverence, his face never changed. It remained as grave and placid while he was knocking the offensive barnstormer out as it had been before, and when the job was done he gave his arm once more to his fair companion, who had looked on quietly as if confident of his ability to take care of himself and her, and marched her off, followed by the admiring glances of the crowd.

Women in Spiritual Darkness.

It is calculated that there are in Asia and adjacent islands about 200,000,000 of Buddhist women. None of these have any hope of immortality, unless in one of the many transmigrations all human beings have to undergo after death, their spirit may chance to enter a boy infant, in which case they will in the course of time become incorporated, or rather etherialized, with Gandama, the greatest good for all. There is, however, but a slender hope of this coming to pass, so they have to make the best of their human life in this world. The women of Burmah are in consequence more ready to become converts to Christianity than the men, for as Christians they are made equal with men as regards accessibility to heaven, and have not to wait for ages for purity of soul to be obtained by frequent transmigrations.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Comment by the Clothier.

"Let's see," he said, as he entered a Jefferson avenue clothing store, "who was it that was stabbed in the house of his friends?" "Whien?" asked the clothier. "Why, long ago, in the palmy days of Greece and Rome, Hang it, the name is familiar, but I can't call it." "Did he die?" "Why, yes, of course. Let's see. It wasn't Plato, nor Cicero, nor Diogenes, was it?" "My friend," said the clothier, as he looked him up and down, "where you got dat suit of clothes?" "I bought this suit in Boston." "Vhien, den, if you go to Boston may pe you find out who stabbed somebody by his friend's house?"—Detroit Free Press.

Claiming the Cancer Germ.

The discovery of the "cancer bacillus," the assumed germ of cancer, threatens to have as many claimants as the authorship of "Junius' Letters." In addition to Dr. Sauerbrey, who was the first before the public, two Italians announce themselves as having independently made the discovery—Dr. Barnabei, professor of clinical medicine at Siena, and Dr. Sanarelli, a graduate and teacher at the same school. But, it seems, a compatriot of Sauerbrey is also in the field to claim priority in the discovery—Dr. Schill, Franco, too, not to be outdone, has her special claimant in Dr. Perin. And, finally, Brazil, in Dr. Domingos Freire, the yellow fever "vaccinationist," claims the honor of the discovery for the New World.—Chicago News.

Disinfection by Steam Heat.

It has been found, in experiments on the disinfection of packages by heat and by steam, that dry heat at the boiling point for an hour is sufficient to destroy active bacilli of all ordinary infectious diseases; but, if spores are to be attacked, a heat of 245 degs. for an hour or of 230 degs. for four hours will be required. The complete penetration of an object by steam heat for more than five minutes is sufficient for its full disinfection; and this method is applicable to such articles as pillows, which are very difficult of penetration to dry heat.—Public Opinion.

French Sardines Again.

French sardines, which for several years have been scarce, leading to the fear that they would eventually become extinct as a food fish, have appeared on the French coast more numerous than ever. The dearth of French fish brought into the market great quantities of American fish of some sort which, done up in cotton seed oil or doctored mustard, have been called sardines. The American product is not to be compared to the French article, which, bathed in a plentiful supply of pure olive oil, is a palatable morsel.—Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.

Good Short Stories.

It is to be regretted that volumes of short stories do not, as a rule, sell well. To our thinking, a number of good short stories make much more agreeable reading than an ordinary novel. Yet we believe publishers would rather risk a novel by a little known writer than a collection of tales by one of considerable fame. Why this is so it is somewhat difficult to understand, for good short stories are attractive, and in some magazines are among the most important and widely read matter.—The Epoch.

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First Nebraska Citizen—Whew! Rather cold this morning. Second Nebraska Citizen—Yes; wind's from the east. "True enough, so it is; didn't notice; blowing direct from New York."—Omaha World.

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A thief was about to relieve a Wall street operator of his handkerchief, when a bystander called the latter's attention to what was going on. "Let him alone," said the broker, good humoredly; "we all have to begin in a small way down here."—Judge.

THE CONVICT'S MOTHER.

How glad was I when first I saw my baby's face, And felt his small, frail fingers clasping mine, I thought of Mary lying in the manger place And wondered not she thought her child divine! Behind his prison bars he frowns on me When the stern jailer opens wide the heavy door. In his pale face and treacherous eye I see No trace of the dear child I nursed of yore; And yet I love him as I never loved before— Love him with such an agony of pain that even now.

My sad soul ceases not to moan and cry With Israel's king, "Would God that I might die For thee, my son, O Absalom, my son!" —Katherine S. Mason.

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The Plattsmouth Herald

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The Year 1888

Will be one during which the subjects of national interest and importance will be strongly agitated and the election of a President will take place. The people of Cass County who would like to learn of

Political, Commercial and Social Transactions

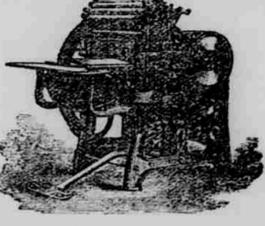
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