

FATE.

The sky is clouded, the rocks are bare! The spray of the tempest is white in air; The winds are out with the waves at play, And I shall not tempt the sea to-day.

The trail is narrow, the wood is dim, The panther clings to the arching limb; And the lion's whelps are abroad at play, And I shall not join in the chase to-day.

But the ship sailed safely over the sea, And the hunters came from the chase in glee; And the town that was builded upon a rock Was swallowed up in the earthquake shock.

—Bret Harte.

A NIGHT ON THE PUY-CLALLAM.

—E-C-B-C-3—

By OTIS LANDSEER SEIBERT.

LL wild beasts are now much more afraid of men than in former times, and this dread of mankind has increased as human weapons have grown more deadly.

Once and once only have I seen a panther that was other than a skulking, timorous brute, intent only on escape. It was fifteen years ago, on the Olympic shore and range, south of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. I then held a kind of roving commission from the Smithsonian Institution. I was but twenty-two, and was thus put on my mettle to penetrate unvisited quarters of the world and keep my eyes open.

And that time the region was a veritable terra incognita. On the map it is termed Clallam County, but for a hundred miles east and west, particularly among the mountains, it was then as primitive and savage as when our race first set foot on the continent.

It was one vast tangle of brush and rotting tree trunks, which gave way like wet paper underfoot, letting the unwary explorer through into unsuspected holes, where he might, very possibly, find himself in the lair of a grizzly that had never yet learned gun-fear. Bears and panthers were the monarchs of this solitude.

Humanly speaking, too, it was a lawless coast. Scattered along the shore, often leagues apart, were a few "lookouts" of otter-hunters, who were a law unto themselves, and did not hesitate to send a far-killing bullet after those who intruded on their "ranges."

The flakes of a few Victoria fishermen might be stumbled on during the season. About the river mouths one would at times catch glimpses of an Indian canoe, or a thin line of smoke rising at sunrise or sunset. But the forest was too dense, rank and tangled for good hunting, and the Indians and half-breeds here were mainly those whom murder or other crimes had rendered outcasts.

In some expectation of finding the precious metals, I had been trying to reach a high mountain valley, visible from the coast, by ascending the gorge of the Puy-Clallam, from Port Townsend, in a sailing dory, which carried my small kit and stock of provisions.

A little way up the tidal portion of the river I had come upon an old log hut, in a secluded nook of the shore. It had evidently been deserted for several years, but it served me as a base for my tramps up the gorge. On the night of my story I had returned to it rather late and thoroughly tired, after a solitary jaunt of twenty miles or more. I put on half a salmon to boil in my porcelain kettle, over a fire which a rock and the end of the hut sheltered, and I also made a skillful of hot "breakfast food," this, with sugar and a spoonful of diluted canned milk, appeased my hunger little, till the salmon was cooked.

Meanwhile dusk had fallen, and the swarming mosquitoes drove me to don net and gloves. The hum of thousands of these insects blended with the distant roar of rapids up the river. To eat my salmon in peace it was necessary to smoke out the hut and retire inside—for the insect pests dashed blindly into my platter and into my mouth.

The moon was not yet quite in sight over the wooded mountain across the stream, but its light was slowly diffusing itself awharf the wilderness; and presently I heard two sea-otters miau-ing at each other down in Little Bay. They seemed to be close in to the shore; and as my supper had revived me considerably, I took my carbine and stepped outside. It was possible, I thought, to get a shot at them as the moon came up; and a sea-otter pelt may be worth a couple of hundred dollars.

My little cooking fire had burned down, and I scuffed some loose sand over it with my foot as I stopped to listen to the otters again. But a dense-gust of mosquitoes dashed into my face as I stood there; and reflecting that I might have to lie or stand quiet for some little time if I stalked the otters, I went back inside for my head net and gloves, standing my carbine against that end of the hut as I did so, for the door was at the other end.

It took me a minute or two to find and put on the net in the dark interior of the hut; but I was coming out when, not twenty feet away, I discovered some large animal with eyes that glowed like coals in the obscurity! It was in the very act of crouching to spring at me! I heard the sough of its breath as it drew itself together to jump, and I leaped back into the hut and slammed the door.

I had no time to spare. The beast came plump against the door with a violence that nearly hurled it back and me with it! One paw came at the crevice by the door-post. I set my back against the door and dug my heels into

the earth to hold it fast, yelling all the while to scare the creature away. But my shouts did not frighten it in the least. With eager growling it dug and tore at the door with its nails. It even tried to dig the earth away beneath it. Then it coursed eagerly round the hut in long bounds, and leaped on the roof. Some slight smell of my fire lingered at the farther end of the hut, and my carbine, too, standing there, must have given off odors; but these smells appeared not to deter the animal.

With low growls it dug at the poles and boughs of the roof. The old dry stuff rattled through on me as I groped for a log bench in the hut to set against the door. I feared that the beast would tear a hole in the roof and spring down on me; but the thick, matted mass of sodden boughs embarrassed it.

All the time I was shouting savagely, and I made haste to strike a whole card of matches, hoping that the odor of brimstone or the gleam of light would deter the beast from its attack. But immediately it came digging at the door again, as if transported by ferocity, and again I threw my weight against the inside of the door, for I dared not trust to the bench.

My disgust with myself for being such a fool as to leave my carbine outside can easily be imagined. I was at my wits' end to know how to beat the creature off. Plainly it was bold from hunger, and had no doubt smelled my salmon, half of which was on a shelf just inside the hut door. I had thoughts of throwing the fish out to it, and then an idea came into my mind.

For preserving the skins of birds and small animals I had taken along a quantity of arsenic in a bottle. When the violence of the creature's efforts at the door had subsided and it was racing round the hut again, I hastily cut a deep gash in the fish with my knife; then, striking another match, I put in as much as twenty grains of the poison.

By this time the animal was on the roof again, scratching and snarling and snuffing. Opening the door a little, I flung out the salmon. I had scarcely done so when, pounce! came the beast to the ground. With a snuff and snarl it seized the fish and ran off a little way. Not so far, however, but that I could hear it eating, its teeth gritting on the backbone.

There must have been five or six pounds of the fish; but within half a minute the animal was back, sniffing at the place for more. I listened anxiously. It jumped on the roof again, then prowled round the hut.

Presently there came an interval of frightful staccato screech! Then followed some lofty tumbling all over the ground about the hut, enlivened by the most blood-curdling yells it is possible to imagine! Peeping out, I caught glimpses of what occurred. Sometimes that poor brute went ten feet in the air, then it clawed up the earth and brush, turned wild somersaults, and tore and bit its own flesh. It tried in vain to vomit forth the poison.

If not hard-pressed in self-defense, I would never administer arsenic to any living creature.

Pathetic moans succeeded the screeches, and then the suffering animal dragged itself to the stream, where I heard it noisily lapping water; and after that the end came very soon.

Fancying that its mate might have been attracted by the yelling, I hastily secured my carbine and stayed inside the hut till morning.

YES, SIR.

The other day an inspector was examining a class in a Peckham school, when he came to the word "imagination," and then asked the meaning. No one could tell him.

"Now," said the inspector, "I'm going to shut my eyes and tell you what I can see. I can see my house. A baker's cart is at the gate. The baker goes up the steps and rings the bell. The servant opens the door and takes a loaf from him and pays him." He opened his eyes and inquired: "Now, then, what would you call that?"

Up went a little hand at the back of the class.

"Well, Willie, speak up," said the inspector. "What do you call it?"

"A lot of lies, sir!"—London Tit-Bits.

SINCERE QUACKERY.

A rather remarkable case of sincere quackery, which perhaps may not be as rare as is generally supposed, occurred in London some time ago.

An old lady sued Sir William Broadbent, a leading London practitioner, because he refused to buy or try her elixir. This "was no common remedy, being free from those minerals which are the root of all evil, but the skillful blending of an herb of which medical men know nothing." Needless to say, the old lady lost her case, which she pleaded in person. Her sincerity was as obvious as her stupidity, and made her a pathetic rather than a ridiculous figure.

RUSSIAN DIPLOMATIC SIRENS.

The Russian Government, too, is also represented abroad, not only by its ambassadors, but by unofficial diplomats of a most interesting description, "a corps d'elite of ladies who are despatched to the various capitals of the world. In Washington Czardom has no less than ten of these ladies. They entertain lavishly, and their drawing-rooms, with shaded rose-colored lights and luxurious furniture and hangings, are palaces of ease for weary legislators and Senators." These fascinating sirens then dictate in whispers what laws shall or shall not be passed by Congress.—Joubert's Fall of Tsardom.

VULTURES OF A MEXICAN DESERT.

A REMARKABLE SIGHT AFTER A RIDE OVER THE ALKALI.

Fust Everywhere, a Flapping, Stray Great Heron, the Distant Blue of the Sierra Madre Chain, the Bones of a Mammoth—Ani Then the Whirring, Black Cone of Desert Scavengers Scouting Carion From Afar.

BY C. WILLIAM BEEBE.



T night the moon looks down upon a desolate, arid plain, stretching away to the great Sierra Madre mountain-chain, deep, shadowy blue, against the western sky. The air is chill, and a bleak wind searches out every fold in our blankets—we might almost be spending a night on the tundras. Absolute silence reigns; neither coyote nor bird of the night breaks the awful hush. If one is wakeful it is a relief at times to grind one's heels into the pumice, or to cough, every sound making a welcome break in the everlasting rhythm of the desert's sleep.

With scarce a moment of dawn the sun floods everything, a most welcome warmth for a while, soon to make one gasp in its breathless heat. Long before the rainy season actually begins, vegetation seems to feel a quickening in the air; the plants scent the coming moisture weeks beforehand: the rushing streams, swollen with the melting snows from the lower mountain tops, brings life to the lands through which they flow; spring is awakening everywhere—except on the alkali plain. The very last glimpse we have of it shows no sign of spring, no hint of green nor of returning life, no resurrection of flowers, not even a green blade of grass.

Where a thin rind of red-brown grass roots partly covers the white dust, parched mesquite bushes find root, and strange, uncouth organ cacti rear their columns, like mammoth canelabra. Here wild-eyed cattle roam uneasily, nibbling occasionally at the bitter grass stems.

Farther out in the desert, where even the mesquite and cacti fail, we ride slowly across the parched surface, wondering if a single living thing can endure the bitterness of the earth. In the distance moves the whirlwinds of dust, tall, thin columns with perfectly distinct outlines, undulating slowly here and there, both life and death in their silent movement. A distant vaquero is the focus of a great cloud of white dust, raised by the horse's hoofs. Pools of dark water with white, crystallized edges now appear, the liquid seeming little different from the solid plain.

Most remarkable it seems to us when a stray great blue heron now and then flies silently up from the desert (what can possibly attract these birds to such a place of death as this, distant even from the bitter pools?), and flaps slowly out of sight. Twice a great ebony raven sails through the dusty air over our heads—the same bird repassing. No other life is visible, save the balanced black specks high against the blue, as invariably a part of a Mexican day are as stars of the night. Herons, vultures, ravens, all move slowly, seeming less alive than the distant dust columns.

But we feel the real spirit of the eternal desert, when, as we turn to retrace our steps, we spy a something white, different from the surrounding earth, and the spell of past ages falls upon us. The bitter water is ever drying up, the whirlwinds carry the dust from place to place, the birds come and go as they please, but this relic of an elephant of the olden time brings past and present into close touch. What scenes has the desert looked upon since this mammoth staggered dying into the quagmire which proved its tomb? One eye smart from the dust, as we reluctantly turn our horses' heads on the back trail; for we should like to stay and search out these fossils—more fascinating in a way than the living beasts and birds which peopled the tropics beyond.

THE SCAVENGERS.

One of the most wonderful of the exhibitions of bird life vouchsafed to us in Mexico comes as we leave the alkali plain and ride away among the mesquite scrub. A confused mass of black appears in the air, which soon resolves itself into hundreds of individual specks. The atmosphere is so deceiving that what at first seems to be a vast cloud of gnats close at hand is soon seen to be a multitude of birds; blackbirds, perhaps, until we approach and think them ravens, and finally, when a quarter of a mile away, we know that they are vultures. Three burros lie dead upon the plain. This we knew yesterday, and here are the scavengers. Never have we seen vultures so numerous, or in more orderly array. A careful scrutiny through the glasses shows many score of black and turkey buzzards walking about and feeding upon the carcasses of the animals. From this point there extends upward into the air a vast inverted cone of birds, all circling in the same direction. From where we sit on our horses there seems not a single one out of place, the outline of the cone being as smooth and distinct as though the birds were limited in their flight to this particular area. It is a rare sight, the sun lighting up every bird on the farther side, and shadowing black as night those nearest us.

Through one's partly closed eyes the whole mass appears as a myriad of slowly revolving wheels, intersecting and crossing each other's orbits, but never breaking their circular outline.

DURATION OF DIGESTION.

The times of digestion of different foods are about as follows on an average: Milk, rice, about an hour or less; whipped eggs, barley soup, salmon, trout, about 1½ hours; peas and flesh, about 2 hours or more; sago, 1½ hours; barley, boiled milk, raw eggs, cabbage with vinegar, soup with fat and bread, about 2 hours; raw milk (Ricchet), baked eggs, ox liver, 2½ hours; lamb, beans, potatoes, cabbage, hash, 2½ hours; boiled eggs, beefsteak, white bread, ham, beef, fish, mutton, 3 hours; pork, poultry, veal, brown bread, 4 hours; salt pork, hard-boiled eggs, 5 hours.—Russell's Strength and Diet.

SOUTH CAROLINA

STATE NEWS ITEMS.

Brock Shoots Billingsley.

E. G. Billingsley, vice president of the West Construction company of Chattanooga, Tenn., was shot in Darlington a few days ago by Joe Brock, a finishing smith of the same concern.

Participants in Riot Unknown.

No arrester have been made as yet in connection with the disorderly conduct at Landrum, says a news item from Spartanburg. Several state constables went to the town, but found everything quiet. The parties who created the disturbance, it seems, left soon after the affray and have not returned.

Two Held on Murder Charge.

Charged with killing Charlie Gilliam, colored, Horace Sheppard, alias George Gilliam, and Richard Gilliam, both negroes, have been arrested and lodged in the county jail at Newberry.

Gilliam was shot from ambush at night, his dead body being found the following morning one mile from the scene of the shooting. It is said that there is strong circumstantial evidence of the liquor question and that there would be open barrooms in South Carolina within two years if the prohibitionists should win their fight.

Mr. Thurmond said he recognized the great evils of whiskey, but that men might honestly differ as to the best means of reducing the evil.

"Does the present mode of selling liquor produce more evil than other ways?" he asked. "Some evils must be prohibited outright; others are best prohibited by controlling them.

"If you will take your present law and enforce it, it will be a good solution of the question. If you vote prohibition you will have it but a year or two. The leaders of this anti-dispensary movement in Columbia are working toward high license, and prohibition is but a step on their way to that end."

Colonel Talbert asked the speaker if it was possible for the legislature to vote for barrooms, and he unqualifiedly affirmed that it could do so.

Colonel Talbert—"Do you believe that they will do it?"

Mr. Thurmond—"I believe they will do it in two years' time."

Colonel Talbert—"Then God have mercy upon their souls."

A HAPPY RECONCILIATION.

Rev. J. W. Roberts and His Divorced Wife, Reunited in Marriage.

Dr. J. W. Roberts, formerly pastor of Trinity church at Atlanta and president of the Wesleyan Female college at Macon, and his former wife, Mrs. Minnie Roberts, have reconciled all their differences and on Tuesday evening they were reunited in marriage at Atlanta.

Only members of the family were present, and the affair was a very quiet and simple one.

The reunion of Dr. Roberts and his wife will be matter of congratulation to their hundreds of friends throughout Georgia who had never ceased to grieve at the unfortunate separation which finally ended in divorce.

Dr. Roberts has been one of the most distinguished ministers in the southern Methodist church. Later he became president of Wesleyan Female college at Macon and, under his administration, the institution prospered. It was while at Wesleyan that the trouble which led to the breach between himself and wife occurred. Dr. Roberts resigned from the institution, though exonerated of any wrong-doing by the trustees, and also withdrew from the Methodist conference. His withdrawal was regarded as a distinct loss to Wesleyan and also to the Southern Methodist church. In speaking of the reconciliation and re-marriage, Dr. Roberts said:

"The beginning of the unfortunate separation was brought about by circumstances which neither my wife or me could control. After the start there were errors made, in judgment, but never was there a time when my wife did not love me, nor was there an instant when I did not love her and our dear children to the very utmost of my heart. I have suffered greatly; how much no human will ever know, but it has been suffering with the knowledge that if the matter were never righted here it would be in the world to come. I am happy today and so is my wife. The wrong to both has been righted."

MAKE WAR ON MOSQUITOES.

IS ADVICE OF SURGEON GENERAL WYMAN TO SOUTHERN PEOPLE?

A Washington dispatch says: In discussing the yellow fever situation Surgeon General Wyman declared that it could not be too strongly impressed upon the people of the southern states that the only sure way to prevent the spread of yellow fever is to screen every person who develops any fever whatever; to war against mosquitoes by sulphur fumigating of houses and by using petroleum on all pools and water receptacles.

COTTON CONDITION LOWERED.

Deterioration Shown in All States Except Georgia and the Carolinas.

The Journal of Commerce, New York, published its August crop report Tuesday, consolidating the returns of 1,325 special correspondents. It shows a condition of 75.4 against 81.2 for June, a decline of 5.8 points. This condition compares with 84 for the corresponding time last year, 77 in 1903 and 80 in 1902. Deterioration is shown in all states except North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.