

WHALES IN HARNESS.

"It is strange," said Jones, reflectively, as he puffed vigorously at his cigar, "that Jackson Peters never tells us of any more of his ideas for inventions. The last thing he mentioned was his ingenious notion of putting hinges on the trunks of orchard trees, so that in case of high wind they could be turned down. You never perfected that plan, did you, Jackson? And Jones turned toward the young man with great apparent interest.

"The thing could be done," answered Peters, as if Jones had cast doubts on its practicability. "And it would be a great boon to fruit growers in Kansas and other draughty parts of the country. Lately I've been wondering that more progress is not made by inventors in the line of submarine war boats. If the fish idea won't work, why not take the duck as the living prototype of a vessel, and produce something which can dive, at least."

"Your notion is of a boat which can dive to escape the enemy, and then peck a hole in his hull with its beak, eh?" remarked Jones.

"Well—yes," assented Jackson Peters.

"Would you have it web-footed, and construct it so it could get out and waddle on the beach in connection with land forces?"

"You are not taking this thing seriously, Jones."

"But I am. And wings, Jackson—give your duck warship wings. Then if it gets caught in shallow water by a superior force, it can rise up and fly away, giving vent to loud and defiant quacks on a steam-quacker."

"Perhaps you're right," said Jackson, wearily. "No doubt about it, in fact."

"I have been detected in the neighborhood of right ideas," admitted Jones. "Possibly you could get some marine hints from an account of my experience with the New York and Boston Leviathan Towing and Transportation Line, which I operated in the late sixties. You remember the line, Robinson?"

Robinson answered "yes," without a blush.

"One night after I went to bed," continued Jones, "it occurred to me that, though hundreds of land animals are of use to man while living, not one of the sea animals had ever been put to any practical use till dead. It seemed probable that the most useful purpose to which living land animals was put by man was as draught animals, of which we may take the horse and the ox as examples. Why were not the animals of the sea used for draught purposes? I became so excited that I lay awake all night thinking about it. The result was the New York and Boston Leviathan Towing and Transportation Line.

"During all of my life to think has been to act, therefore you need not be surprised to know that in a month I had left New Bedford on a chartered whaling-steamship looking for whales. I had decided that the whale was the animal most suited to my purpose. Off the coast of Labrador we sighted a large school of whales. Fortunately it was a graded school, so to say, consisting of true whales, Greenland whales, hump-backed whales, fin-backed whales, spermaceti whales, and so forth. We had considerable trouble in driving them at first, but I rigged up a fog-horn with a reed so it would say 'shoo,' and they soon learned what it meant, and we worked them along down the coast by easy stages. A good many of the more skittish ran back, and I thought at one time that I might have to send a tug ahead with a herring on the end of a stick to coax them; but we finally got them down to Gardiner's Bay, Long Island, and grounded them in the shallow water.

"Of course it has always been self-evident that the whale would make a splendid driving animal if he could be controlled. The most important and hardest thing was clearly to keep him from diving. A careful study showed me that the whale could not dive without first putting his head down; therefore, all that was needed was a check-rein sufficiently strong to restrain him in that respect. I selected a right-whale about seventy-five feet long, which I had noticed was a good traveller, and proceeded to harness him. I put a bit about four inches in diameter in his mouth, with ten foot check-rings on each end. From this bit I ran a hawser along his back and around the part of his tail where the flukes are joined to the body. I then put on a large collar, attached a sand-barge by four-inch wire cables, and turned him toward deep water for a trial spin.

"Naturally, of course, that whale did not readily take to harness. He reared up, rolled over, charged ahead, struck out fiercely with his flukes, blew a stream of water like an artesian well, and otherwise misbehaved. His efforts to dive were something startling, but the check-rein held, and he finally gave it up.

"I had wire-cable reins connected with the wheel in the pilot-house, and stood there and guided him, occasionally touching him up with a bamboo fishing-pole. In two hours he drove fairly well, and in a week was fully broken, though he always remained hard-mouthed, and was never what you might call a lady's whale.

"I then went ahead and broke the others of the school to harness. I found the Greenlands made the best draught

animals, and I used them in towing lighters, canal boats, barges, and so forth, either driving them single or two abreast. The fin-backs, I soon discovered, were the best driving beasts, being light, rangy, and stylish. I took a young and quick-stroke fin-back for my own private use, and used him on my yacht. He was a free driver, a little inclined to shy at light-houses and promontories, but gentle as a kitten. He could throw spray in the face of any other whale along the coast. He was better on a smooth track, like the Sound, but did not make a bad showing outside, where the track was heavy. He was always rather nervous about being hitched up, and it usually took two men to get him into the shafts."

Jones paused as if there was no more to tell.

"But," said Jackson Peters, "I fail to find any notice of the New York and Boston Leviathan Towing and Transportation Line in the classified newspaper advertisements, either under the head of 'Shipping' or 'Transportation.'"

"You should look under the heading of 'Whales—coastwise.' However, you wouldn't find it there, either, now. I gave up the business on account of the continued opposition of the steamship people. They made various ridiculous charges, and got the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals excited. The absurd cry was set up that my check-reins were cruel, and that I was docking the flukes of my driving animals. They also got a law enacted requiring me to stop every fifty miles and feed my whales out of a nose-bag made from a balloon—something utterly uncalled for. The charge of fast driving was likewise made against me, and a law passed prohibiting a speed of forty-five miles an hour. Finally I gave the whole scheme up and turned my whales loose. I am essentially a man of peace, esteeming quietude above all things. Strife is as distasteful to me as untruth. The whales lapsed into barbarism, but did not utterly forget their cunning. Two years later, when the bark Curlew's Call tried to take my fin-back, off the coast of Greenland, he dodged the harp on, took it in his mouth like a tooth-pick, and punched the boats so full of holes with it that they looked like nutmeg graters."—*Harper's Weekly*.

EVERY one will have been pleased to learn that the steamship San Pedro is to be removed before long from the place she has so long occupied at the entrance of the Victoria harbor, of which she has been no ornament, and to vessels attempting to enter which she has been an unquestioned source of danger.