

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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SEAGULLS.

As one of the great ocean steamers was rushing along on her way across the broad Atlantic Ocean and was already some hundred miles out at sea, a little boy ran up to his mother and cried:

"O mother, get me some biscuits too."

"Why, Freddie," replied his mother, "what do you want the biscuits for?"

"To throw out to the pretty birds," Freddie said. "Oh, come, mother dear, and see the pretty white birds flying after us. See how they dip down and pick up the biscuits on the water. What kind of birds are they, mother, and where do they sleep away out here so far from land?"

"They are seagulls, my child," replied the mother. "They just sleep floating on the water—no matter how rough it is. They sometimes follow ships hundreds of miles, picking up anything that the cook throws overboard. They are found on all large bodies of water—on the big fresh-water lakes as well as on the ocean—but they are thickest around the fishing banks. They gather in hundreds about the vessels where the fish are being cleaned. As the waste parts of the fish are thrown overboard the seagulls dash down with hoarse cries and great flapping of wings, tearing at the pieces and fighting over them, but the fishermen pay no attention to them.

We show one of these fishing schooners that has been disabled in a storm and is left to her fate. The seagulls can be seen flocking around by hundreds, darting down upon the pieces of fish that have been washed out of the sinking vessel.

If our picture could make you hear them as well as you can see them, you would want to close your ears and run away.

OYSTERS ON TREES.

The other day I heard somebody speak of "oysters hanging upon the branches of trees on the borders of the Chesapeake Bay."

"That sounds like a fairy tale," thought I to myself.

I determined to investigate. So I said: "I always supposed oysters grew under the water. I never knew they hung in clusters on tree branches like apples. Curious sort of oysters those must be which grow on trees along the Chesapeake!"

"Chesapeake Bay has the best kind of oyster," said the Talking Man. "The rea-

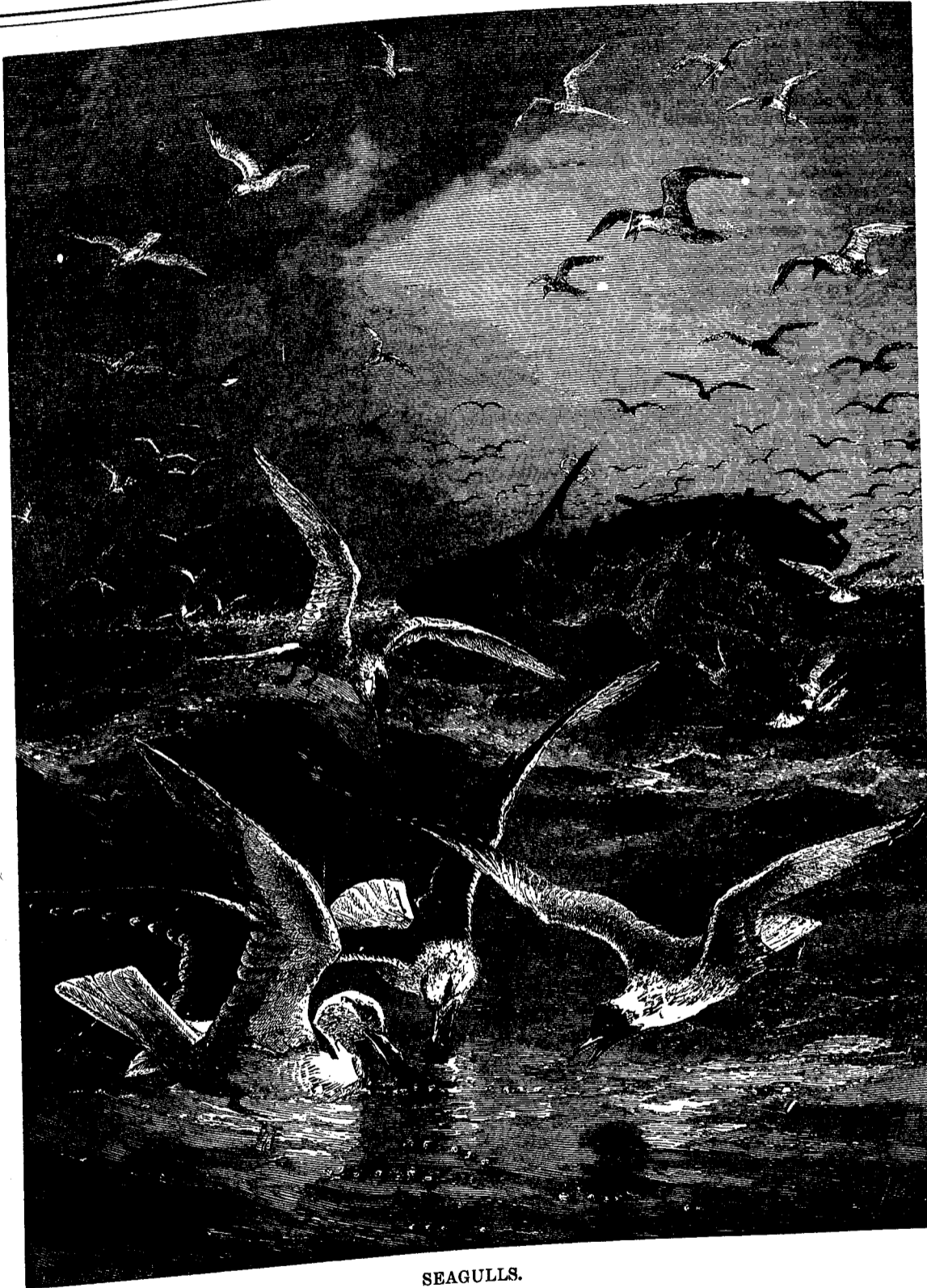
son they are sometimes found growing on tree branches is this: The spawn of the oyster floats about in the water, tossed by wind and waves. It has the quality of attaching itself firmly to any solid substance it touches. Sometimes it might be the bottom of a ship, a rock, or a tree branch. You know the bottom of a ship often needs scraping on account of the shell-fish adhering to it.

Now, the branches of trees often droop into the water. They do it along the bor-

ders of the Chesapeake the same as on the banks of any other river or bay. At high tide such branches will be covered with water, and when the tide goes back, the branches come to the surface again.

"The spawn sticks to those boughs when they are beneath the waves. In a few days the tiny oysters begin to develop, and before long, at every low tide, the branches can be seen hanging out, with little oysters growing all over them.

"Sometimes a branch which is often un-



SEAGULLS.

der water will be nearly covered with small oysters. It looks very odd, of course, but it's a common enough sight down there.

"Grow? They don't grow very large, to be sure. To attain perfection an oyster must be always under water, and these hang half the time out of it. When they are exposed too long to the hot sun, they die. Their weight often causes them to fall off.

"Little oysters are sometimes transplanted. Not off tree branches, but from the beds at the bottom of the bay. They are planted in oyster beds in other places, where, in a couple of years, they grow to maturity.

"It sounds funny to talk of picking oysters off trees," said I, "or even seeing them grow there."

"Funny enough. But they do grow there. I've seen it lots of times," said the Talking Man. "That's the way queer stories get about. Somebody hears of a thing and doesn't understand the sense of it. And most people never stop to ask what it means. They either repeat the story for a marvel, or say they don't believe it."—*Harper's Young People.*

A WORD TO BOYS.

If we are to have drunkards in the future, some of them are to come from the boys to whom I am now writing, and I ask you if you want to become one of them? No, of course you don't! Well, I have a plan that is just as sure to save you from such a fate as the sun is to rise tomorrow. It never failed, it never will fail, and it is worth knowing.

Never touch liquor in any form. That is the plan and it is worth putting into practice. I know you don't drink now, and it seems to you as if you never would. But your temptation will come, and it will probably come this way. You will find yourself sometime with a number of companions and they will have a bottle of wine on the table. They will drink and offer it to you. They will regard it

as a manly practice, and very likely they will look upon you as a milksop if you don't indulge with them.

Then what will you do? Will you say, "No, no! none of that stuff for me!" or will you take the glass with your common sense protesting, and your conscience making the whole draught bitter, and then go off with a hot head and skulking soul that at once begins to make apologies for itself and will keep doing so all its life? Boys, do not become drunkards.