

CRUSOE'S LOST ISLAND.

JUAN FERNANDEZ SWALLOWED UP BY THE SEA.

The Boys Heard of this Event with Genuine Regret—Not a Single Speck of a Idyllic Is-land Remains—It Was Eaten by an Earth-quake and has Disappeared.

It is with genuine regret that many a grown up boy had learned that Robinson Crusoe's famous island is no more. That this place of all others on earth so dear to youthful fancy should have been swallowed up by the sea seems like a stroke of universal misfortune, and when we reflect on the loss to future generations of boys the event takes on the proportions of a great catastrophe. How many thousands of youngsters do you suppose have finished De Foe's fascinating romance and firmly resolved that when they grow up they would hunt up that very island and live on it just as Crusoe did, with his goats and parrots and faithful man Friday? But the boy of the future will learn with sorrowing soul that in the latter part of 1896 Crusoe's island disappeared in the sea after having been rent in twain by a fearful earthquake, and that not a single peak of that idyllic islet remains above the waves.

Apart from the romantic interest with which De Foe surrounded the spot the island of Juan Fernandez had a most interesting and thrilling history of its own. This was largely due to its isolated position. Lying as it did—how old and sad it seems to speak of Crusoe's island in the past tense—some 400 miles off the western coast of South America, it was the only break in an immense stretch of water. The nearest land to it was another little island about 200 miles farther out in the Pacific.

Juan Fernandez was about 14 miles in length and 4 or 5 miles wide, just about as large as Staten Island in New York bay; but, unlike that exclusive debaucher of the metropolis, its shores were dead, and from the center there rose a peak 3,000 feet high, to which the Spaniards gave the name El Yunque, meaning the "anvil." In later years this peak went by the name of Crusoe's Lookout. The island could be approached but from one side, where there was a good harbor formed by a hand-locked bay, in which the water was deep enough for a modern warship to ride at anchor. Ages ago the island was probably thrown up by a volcanic eruption, and it is appropriate that it should have been destroyed by the same force.

A bold Spanish mariner by the name of Juan Fernandez gave his name to the island. He discovered it in 1563 and left some goats behind. He returned a few years later and planted a Spanish colony there, which survived until Spain conquered the original inhabitants of Chile and transferred the island colonists to the mainland. For a time the island was abandoned, but early in the sixteenth century became the haunt of various pirates who at that time swept the seas. Spanish buccaners, Dutch marauders and English pirates made it a refuge in turn, and it was used as a base of operations by some of the most famous rascals that ever flew the Jolly Roger.

At length the Spanish government decided to put a stop to the raids which these adventurous gentlemen were making upon their South American seaports. Colonists and a garrison of soldiers were sent to Juan Fernandez. A fort was built high up on El Yunque, and the pirates gave the island a wide berth. Volcanic eruptions finally destroyed the fort and the colonists' houses, and the island was once more left to the goats.

In the meantime two unfortunate men had experienced a term of solitary life on Juan Fernandez. One was a Mosquito Indian, who was left there by a pirate ship in the hurry of an escape from a Spanish warship. He lived there for two years and was rescued about 1682 by the same ship. Another sailor was left there under somewhat similar circumstances and rescued a year or so later.

Then came Alexander Selkirk, on whose strange experiences De Foe based his immortal story. Selkirk was a Scotchman, who sailed in 1703 in an English Privateer-ship which had been fitted out to prey upon the commerce of France and Spain, then at war with England. Dampier commanded the expedition, which was composed of two vessels—one being the St. George, which he commanded himself. On the other, the Cinque Ports, was Selkirk, who shipped as sailing master under Captain Stradling.

The enterprise was unfortunate from the start. In the first place a rich Spanish galleon was missed, and Captain Stradling proved to be a tyrant, who was cordially hated by all the crew. After some three months of storm tossed sailing the Cinque Ports put in at Juan Fernandez for wood and water.

When the vessel was ready to sail again, with the crew on the eve of Mutiny, Selkirk asked to be left behind, preferring peaceful solitude to the other prospect. He was accordingly put ashore, with his gun, ammunition and his sea chest. At the last moment, the record has it, he repented, but Captain Stradling laughed at his ap-

peals and sailed away. For four years and four months Selkirk lived the life which De Foe so vividly pictured and was rescued in 1709 by an English ship. Juan Fernandez became, after Selkirk ceased to be lord of the isle, a Chilean convict station, and later was occupied by a German colony. But even in modern times it was so infrequently visited by ships that colonists did not stay there long; and when last heard from, a year or two ago, there were not more than a dozen people living on the island.

Of course doubters have appeared who have declared that Juan Fernandez was not the island on which Selkirk was marooned at all. Tabago, near the mouth of the Orinopo and one of the Caniboes, has been given the honor. These claims, however, have never been well supported, and Juan Fernandez, the island that was but is not, will go down in history as Crusoe's island. —Alfred R. Rowley.

STAIRBUILDING.

In Larger Cities Now a Separate Branch of the Builder's Art.

Up to fifty years ago carpenters building houses constructed the stairs, as well as every other part of the wood work. Stairs took up a considerable amount of room in a shop, and about that time some carpenters and builders began giving out the stair work to other carpenters, to whom they furnished the lumber. Very soon after that stair builders started in business on their own account with their own capital and material, and ever since then stair building has been in New York a separate business. In some other large cities stairbuilding is now carried on as a separate branch of work. In many other places the stairs are still made by the house builder. Stair building has a literature of its own—there are books that treat upon this subject only.

Stairs, of course, must be built with absolute accuracy, and in a great city where buildings are put up in great variety and for various purposes, where all the space is utilized, and where so far as possible space is economized, the stair building problems presented are many. In designing a building the architect makes plans of the stairs, drawn to scale; the stair builder makes from them the working drawings. Ordinary straight stairs are when possible, put together in the stair builder's shop and carried bodily to the place where they are to be set up. Fine stairs and all stairs that are bent or curved or reversed, with landings, all stairs that are built otherwise than straight, are set up in the building in which they are to be used. The stair builder looks after the support of the stairs as well as the building of the stairs themselves.

While stairs are built from plans and measurements, and, of course, with the utmost care to insure accuracy, yet mistakes are sometimes made, and a mistake in stair building is a serious matter. A defect in stairs cannot be cured; the remedy for it would need to be distributed through the entire structure. When a mistake has been made there is nothing to do but to throw the stairs away and build anew. As a matter of fact, however, mistakes are rarely made. Many varying sets of stairs are made and never put together until they are finally placed in position in the building for which they were designed, and almost invariably they are made with such accuracy that they come out exactly right.

The height of the stair risers and the width of the treads are determined to a greater or less degree by the situation in which the stairs are to be placed. Some stairs are "easy" and some are not. It is possible to make stairs too easy. There are standard measurements for height of risers and width of treads, and these measurements are used where space permits, as it usually does. People become thus in dwelling places and elsewhere accustomed to stepping certain distances in going up and down stairs, and it might be that making steps to be used under such conditions with lower rises would really make them more fatiguing, rather than less so. Stairs with low risers and broad treads are made for use under certain other conditions, as, for instance, when the stairs with low riser and broad treads are also sometimes used in front of churches and other buildings of a public character, which people habitually approach with comparative deliberation.

Faithful to His Captain.

That was a loyal if not very gentle answer once made by a private soldier to Frederick the Great of Prussia, as the story is told in Harper's Round Table:

During a campaign in Silesia the king made it his habit to stroll through his camp in disguise at night, to come into closer relations with his soldiers. One night he was stopped by a sentry, but giving the proper password, was permitted to proceed. Instead of doing so, however, he endeavored to tempt the sentry into accepting a cigar, saying that a smoke would solace his long watch.

"It is against the rules," said the soldier.

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"But you have my permission," said Frederick. "Your permission!" cried the soldier. "And who are you?" "I am the king." "The king be hanged!" said the incorruptible sentry. "What would my captain say?"

INDIA FAMINE-STRICKEN.

Canada to the Rescue.

According to the report of an official high in the service of the Indian Government, six millions of people in India are on the verge of starvation, and already the famine has claimed thousands of victims. The desperate state of the case is now accurately known, and the whole civilized world is aroused. Relief must be sent to India, and that, too, without delay. The people of Great Britain have already taken action. America is following their example, and even the Russians are contributing to the relief of British subjects in the Indian Empire. The relief movement in Canada has been inaugurated by the Montreal Star newspaper, whose publisher has headed the list with a subscription of five hundred dollars. This opens the relief fund in this country, and from all parts of the Dominion come words of approval and promises of co-operation. Premier Laurier has written to the Star stating his approval of the course taken by its publishing, and to the Relief Fund he adds his cheque for a handsome amount.

The Protestant clergy of Montreal have all joined in a memorial to the Star supporting the case of Canadian assistance for India. The appeal is being heard and responded to. Subscriptions to the Relief Fund, great or small, sent to the Montreal Star will be publicly acknowledged.

Bad News for Divorce Lawyers.

There is bad news for the divorce lawyers of Chicago in the announcement that some of the girls of that city have organized for the purpose of securing a five-year marriage extended to a term of five years, and ultimately even for life.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Undoubtedly.

Fred—"What do you think of this case where a man was fined \$50 for kissing a girl?" Dolly—"I think he got the wrong girl."—Philadelphia North American.

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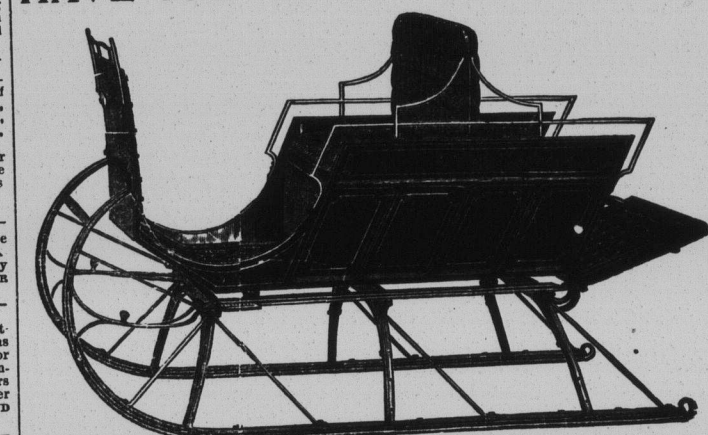
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