

up my effects, I was almost utterly exhausted. Just then my last pine knot torch expired. But this now gave me little concern, for I had reached a point barely twenty feet below the top of the crater's rim, and could see quite distinctly, as the sun had not yet gone down.

I had left the little rivulet far behind in my devious ascent; so, wearily retracing my steps, I found it again, and, placing in my mouth the last crumb of the cracker, I took a deep draught from the limpid fluid. Then regaining my lofty perch, — not, however, without being severely stung by a scorpion on the way, — I prepared for sleep.

That night I had a horrible dream. I thought that I rolled from the ledge into the abyss. Down, down, indefinitely down, I felt myself plunging, while a great sound of thunder was in my ears. At length, of all the impossible freaks of dreamland, I landed safely on a ledge, with a moderate bump, which merely awoke me. I was lying on my back, and started up in alarm, for I could see no stars above me. All was inky blackness. Good heavens! The dream must be true. Surely the heavens had fallen in with a vengeance. In my first confusion, I argued that perhaps I had fallen so far that the stars were out of sight; but just then a crash of thunder and a vivid flash of lightning apprised me that the blackness overhead was only a temporary freak of the elements.

After awaking from another and longer nap in a drenching rain, I was further alarmed to find my left hand so swollen from the sting of the scorpion that I could use it only with the greatest difficulty. I also discovered, after due toil at the rocky roof overhead, that it would be impossible to effect an aperture sufficiently large to admit the passage of my body. The rock through this was like adamant. After great effort I succeeded in piercing with my steel-pointed pick a small hole, and pushed through it all my effects, but could not follow. The only way of making the ascent was to project the rope through, so that it would hang over the ledge, then to secure it by the handle of the pick under the hole, then climb up over the brink of the ledge by means of the suspended cord. It was a fearful thing to contemplate, — dangling again over that frightful pit, — while, in my present weary and faint condition, with a disabled hand, it seemed almost impossible; nevertheless, it was the only chance, and I nerved myself for the attempt. Slung the rope through, and securing it, I swung over the gulch with a prayer for deliverance on my lips. By great effort and indescribable pain from my suffering hand, I succeeded in climbing to the coveted ledge, where I sunk down moaning and breathless.

But I was now so high up that I could look over the verge of the pit almost to the roots of the encircling trees. To my amazement, I discovered that I had emerged almost at the very spot where I had left poor Hereford and the perfidious Mexican at the time of my descent into the pit, in which I had remained three days and four nights. From the fact that I knew my ascent had not been made in a straight line, I argued that I must have performed the complete circuit of the crater once, perhaps twice, in the course of my devious windings. The spot whence I had been lowered down before lowered down bore many indications of the terrible struggle which must have ensued before Gonzago had succeeded in overcoming and flinging his victim into the abyss.

Now, leaving my implements behind me, by a great effort I threw my heavy bag of gold far up and beyond the smooth, treacherous green slope; then I clambered up, with a profound shudder at the horrors I was leaving behind. I had not crawled more than half-way up the brief, funnel-shaped slope when I heard a fierce "Carumba!" behind me, and, turning my head, while I clung to a cactus with both hands, I saw the infernal Don at the edge of the opposite pine-skirt, taking deliberate aim at me with his rifle. With the instinct of a guilty soul, he had been unable permanently to leave the scene of his fearful crime, but had probably, haunted the gulch like a spectre, fearing that the ghosts of the dead within would rise and bear witness against him.

He fired, but, in his excitement or terror, missed me entirely. My belt still retained its never-absent knife and revolver, and the presence of that infernal wretch nerved me with the new incitement of vengeance.

By a desperate effort I scrambled up before he could get another shot at me; but the blood-thirsty ruffian was around the pit and confronting me as soon as I gained the skirt of trees. Emaciated and disabled as I was, without a moment's hesitation, and without a word, I caught my knife and closed with him. He was a man of prodigious muscular power; but vengeance nerved me with superhuman strength. Neither party expected mercy. We were at such close quarters that neither of us could, for the instant, use a weapon. Brief but unspeakably terrible was that struggle on the verge of the bottomless abyss. At length I felt his fresh and well-fed muscle overcoming my wasted frame. I felt him lifting and bearing me to the horrid edge. The agonizing thought of being again precipitated into that perdition of darkness inspired me with electric volition and thews of steel. With a yell, which must have been heard for miles, I got my swollen left hand on his windpipe and closed it with a deadly grip. Then, as he relaxed his clutch, I got in a blow with my knife, then another, and he rolled from me toward the verge of the chasm. Regaining my own balance only with the utmost difficulty, I saw him stay

his descent for one instant by clutching a prickly-pear bush, while he glared at me with eyes in which hatred and horror commingled. Then, as the weight of his grasp tore the shrub from its tendrils, he disappeared.

I heard the echoes rising from the depths of the pit as the body clove its way downward, bounding from ledge to ledge and displacing in its fall loose stones and masses of earth, the sounds dying away faintly and more faintly still till all was silent.

Faint with hunger, and overcome by my extraordinary experiences, I sought my rifle, which I had left in the thicket before my descent into the pit. I found it, together with poor Hereford's, and managed to shoot a great wood grouse. This served to appease my raging hunger; and then I lay down, overcome, to sleep a sleep of many hours. It was full blazing day when I awoke.

I never heard what became of Gonzago's wife and child. They were not at the plateau where I had left them, though the donkey and mule were; and they were never seen at Ophir again. Like enough the villain murdered them both.

Reaching Marysville, at length, in safety, I passed a few days in rest, but never uttered a word of my adventure. To make my way home, to leave behind me the horrors of the gulch, and never to lure thither, by tales of its treasures, other victims, was my set purpose; so I passed from the mountains to the coast a silent man; nor was my silence on that one theme again broken until to tell to poor Hereford's mother the awful story of her son's burial in Scorpion Gulch.

OYSTER AND CLAM FISHERIES.

With every recurring season the wholesale cost of oysters and clams is noticeably enhanced. To this date keepers of restaurants and eating-houses have been able to supply the public at prices which prevailed for many years past. The day, however, is near at hand when the patrons of these establishments must be prepared to meet a largely augmented tariff on their favorite roasts, stews, and broils. Apart from a growing scarcity due to the increased demand for home consumption, we are called upon to supply annually to foreign consumers thousands upon thousands of barrels. It is not to be wondered at that our oyster beds promise soon to rival those of Europe in barrenness. The efforts made abroad, regardless of cost, and under the protection and care of energetic governments, to encourage and foster the artificial propagation of oysters have been attended with such slight success as would lead us to suppose that attempts in a similar direction in this country will be productive of even less satisfactory results.

Where in Europe there were formerly hundreds of square miles of oyster beds, here there are thousands; consequently we may hope for a few years longer to enjoy the oyster at a price which will not be entirely prohibitive. The demand for this bivalve, however, is here so far in excess of what it was in Europe in the best years of its oyster beds than no comparison can be instituted on which to base a surmise as to the length of time necessary for the total exhaustion of our sources of supply. Whereas, abroad, oysters were always more or less a luxury for the rich, here they are consumed, either on the shell or canned, in every household of the land from Maine to the Pacific coast.

So far back as 1850 ten million bushels were annually taken from the Chesapeake alone. To-day probably thirty million bushels are withdrawn from the same beds. No natural increase can keep pace with such an exhaustively demand. What scientific research may develop in the future in regard to the artificial propagation of the oyster can not be foretold. The results so far attained do not present a particularly encouraging outlook. One locality is very much like another in the monotonous similarity of the criminal and reckless treatment of our fisheries; consequently in citing the case of the Great South Bay of Long Island we tell the story of them all.

When the Dutch retired from New Amsterdam, and the English secured possession of the entire territory of Long Island, large grants under royal patent were given to favored subjects of the crown. Some of these, where the land touched the edge of the numerous bays which flank the south side of the island, carried with them the proprietary rights to the fishing and fowling of the adjacent waters. So slight a value was placed by the proprietors upon these privileges that in one case the right was relinquished, in favor of a town on the edge of a bay twelve miles long and two broad, for the sum of eighteen dollars. Could this privilege, later on, have been sustained and protected, it would have brought to the owner a princely revenue.

In certain cases these original rights to the ownership of the products of the bays and estuaries were retained by the descendants of the first proprietor. This has given rise to litigation, to which no end as yet can be seen. Could the owners of these large tracts have foreseen the destruction of what promised to be of inexhaustible proportions? No one comparatively a few short years since could imagine that the magnificent native oyster and clam beds of the Great South Bay should ever come so near to barrenness as is the case to-day. The actual disappearance of the oyster from these waters might have already been accomplished were it not for the fact that the planting of this

bivalve on leased lots under water has for a time postponed the evil hour.

Before the demand and consumption of the oyster became so enormous, a simple method of taking this bivalve was employed. The use of tongs was universal. Under its dispensation the exhaustion of the beds was practically impossible. The opening of new and profitable markets required the employment of more expeditious of taking the oyster from its bed; consequently the dredge—a bag-net with heavy iron jaws, towed in the wake of a powerful sail-boat—was introduced. If this instrument simply scraped up the oysters it would not be so harmful; but for every oyster that it captures the heavy iron jaws press to destruction a dozen into the mud. Through the use of the dredge the European oyster beds have become barren. For Long Island fishery showed no signs of exhaustion before the introduction of this trap. Immediately following upon its use the price of oysters commenced to advance from forty to sixty cents a tub (rather more than a bushel) to two dollars and fifty cents for the same measure. This increase in price, it is, however, but fair to say, was somewhat accelerated by the necessities of the foreign market, which absorbed the catch of the South Bay in preference to that of all others, from the fancied resemblance of oysters from this locality to the European sorts. Notwithstanding these demands the price of the "Blue Points" of Long Island has not enhanced in proportion to that of oysters taken from other well-known waters.

It has been supposed that the planting of oysters on lots under water, protected and cared for by particular owners, would in a measure restore the prosperity of the oyster fishery of the Great South Bay. As a set-off to this, oysters when planted as indicated appear to be subject to perils which do not assail them on their native beds. Diseases and vigorous foes, which were less destructive to the native beds, render this new industry of oyster-culture as precarious a crop as any grown on the land. A drought is as fatal to it as any agricultural operation, not in the actual destruction of the oyster, but in a loss of condition from the lack of supply of fresh water from the numerous streams flowing into the bay. A rainy season is followed by a crop of fat and full-flavored oysters, while during one of light rain fall they are tasteless, and mere bags of water. From the washings of the streams the oyster secures the food necessary for its full development and nourishment. Modern ingenuity has devised a remedy against the ill effects of a dry season. The oysters are placed upon floats and covered with fresh-water heated to a proper temperature by steam. A few days of this treatment transforms a flabby and watery oyster into one of aldermanic obesity.

While the cultivation of the oyster by planting has up to this time been moderately successful, it remains to be seen whether in the near future, in the face of the exhaustion of the native beds, it will be able to meet the enormously increasing demand. With the experience of the yearly enhancement in the price of oysters, it will be safe to say that those raised by cultivation will not be more than sufficient, as is the case to-day in Europe, to supply as a luxury the tables of the opulent.

The future of the hard-clam fishery is even more depressing than that of the oyster. Formerly that of Long Island was famous. "Little Neck" held with clams the same significance as "Blue Point" did with oysters. Moreover, it possessed an elastic expansion which enabled it to cover a large area of territory. We have clams to-day simply because they are not dredged, but taken with tongs, or raked on flats left here by the receding tide. Were they as reproductive as the oyster, there could be no fear of their disappearance for years to come. Unfortunately the waters in which they are taken are limited in extent. A brief statement will show the decline in this fishery. What is said of the locality mentioned will apply to all. The clam beds in the Great South Bay of Long Island were once famous sources of supply. Ten years since a good daily catch for one man fishing with tongs from a boat was five thousand clams, slightly more or less. These sold from ten to fifteen cents per hundred. To-day one thousand clams per man is a good average, and sell at the rate of from twenty-five to thirty-five cents per hundred. Coney Island and similar resorts absorb during the season vast numbers of clams. Moreover canning factories have been established. These send to all parts of the world steamed clams, or chowder.

We can not eat our cake and have it too, or, in other words, we can not supply with oysters and clams the immense and growing population of this country as well as that of foreign lands. To accomplish this feat we shall need a more intelligent care and supervision of our fisheries than has been accorded in the past.

GASTON FAY.

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

London, July 25.

Mrs. HAWES is compiling a Chaucer Birth-day Book. It will be published this autumn.

THE Savage Club had a grand dinner on Saturday last, and welcomed several American representatives of the Lotus Club of New York. There was a great deal of mirth heard, and wit and wisdom spoken.

THE Lady Godiva procession at Coventry on Bank holiday has been fully arranged, and the lovely rider engaged.

LORD ASHBURNHAM, failing to obtain the price he asked from the French Government, has, it is said, decided to dispose of the MSS. to the highest bidder.

THE price of Mr. Bereton's "Biography of Mr. Irving," with several illustrations, is to be fifteen shillings, but there will be a three guinea edition de luxe.

THE restless and the everlasting workers are agitating for a delivery of letters on Sunday. Let us have one day of peace, in the name of holiness and wisdom.

RECENTLY an elegantly bound copy of the Holy Scriptures was presented to Mr. Story Maskelyne, M.P. So singular a gift to an Oxford don has caused many to wonder what are the motives which prompted the selection.

A NEW "Peerage" by Mr. James E. Doyle, is in the press. It will show the succession, dignities, and offices of every peer from the Conquest down to 1872, and will be illustrated with portraits, shields of arms, and fac-similes of autographs.

THE King's road Promenade and East Cliff, Brighton, have been beautified and adorned by a number of evergreens, which now give a rural and fresh appearance to that rather arid looking bit of the grand old town.

THE structural alterations that have been going on for some time at the back of the Adelphi Theatre give great facilities for stage effects, and have been found very useful in producing the old favorite piece, "The Streets of London."

Now that the model of the Duke's statue is more developed, it appears that it is intended to place it with the face looking straight through the Horse Guards' Arch, which certainly will give the colossal statue every possible chance of approval.

WHILE mentioning the prowess in shooting of the Scotch at Wimbledon, it has not been observed that they also brought out a new military fashion. Several members of the London Scottish, bare of knee, came covered with respectably proportioned Gamps.

IRVING BISHOP, who has been creating so much excitement in London, is well-known to many older citizens of New York, from the circumstances of his birth and youthful troubles. His father was at one time a millionaire. His mother was a relative of Washington Irving, after whom the son was named.

HER Majesty is understood to have become possessor of two handsome sedan chairs, formerly the property of Queen Charlotte, which were to have been included in the sale of the effects of Princess Mary of Cambridge and his Royal Highness the Duke of Teck.

THE Corporation of Grimsby have decided to present the Duke of Connaught with a large gold key of elaborate workmanship, and to the Duchess and Lady Eleanor Heneage, who will plant trees in the park, will be presented gold and silver spades as souvenirs of the event.

AT Glasgow, on the 6th of September, Mr. Irving will be entertained at dinner by the Pen and Pencil Club—a local Bohemian set, like the "Savages." Another semi-private dinner may also be given to the distinguished actor in London before he leaves for good. Mr. Toole is moving in the matter, but nothing is yet settled.

A HANDSOME piece of plate has been presented by Lord Waverley and the Right Hon. A. S. Ayrton to Mr. Lennox Boyd "on behalf of many members of the Reform Club, in recognition of the services and sacrifices he made in resisting the attempt to interfere with the right of the members to decide upon the admission of candidates."

AGAIN the whole Civil Service is agitated. In one department detectives have been employed to tempt the officials with drink and cigars in order to test their superiority to officers of the kind. The head of another department has sent round demanding from every official personally whether he communicated important public facts to a member of Parliament.

THE "Merry Duchess" increases in popularity, and the elegant little Royalty consequently is brimful nightly. When town goes out of town and country arrives, the folk from the provinces will doubtless be drawn to this house by the wide-spread fame of this merry piece, and by the renowned grace and sparkle of the fascinating actress, singer, and manageress—pretty Kate Stanley.