

a secure prisoner. The barbs upon the inside prevent the prey from slipping out, no matter how smooth and slimy his body may be.

A small instrument made upon a similar plan can be used for catching snakes or other reptiles that are not safe or pleasant to handle. Frogs may also be readily captured with a fish spear, and any boy who takes the time to make one of these weapons will find himself amply repaid for his trouble.

Armed with fish spears and torches great fun can be had spearing fish from a row-boat at night. The torch illuminates the water and appears to dazzle the fish, at the same time disclosing their whereabouts to the occupants of the boat, who, with poised spears, await a favourable opportunity to strike the scaly game.

HOW TO MAKE THE TORCHES.

One way to make a torch is to wind lamp-wick upon a forked stick. The ball of wick must be thoroughly saturated with burning fluid of some kind. The torches should all be prepared before starting upon the excursion.

Never take a supply of kerosene or any explosive oil with you in the boat, for, in the excitement of the sport, accidents of the most serious nature may happen. A safe light can be made with a number of candles set in a box. A glass front allows the light to shine through, and a piece of bright tin for a reflector behind adds brilliancy to the illumination. A box of this description is generally called a "jack-box;" it is much less trouble than the flaring pine-knot or wick-ball torches.

The candles in the "jack-box" should be replenished each time after it is used; in this manner the jack may be kept always ready for use. After the candles are lighted fasten the box in the bow of the boat; here it will throw a bright light ahead, illuminating the water, but casting a heavy, dark shadow in the boat, concealing the occupants from view. The boys in the boat can, of course, see all the better for being themselves in shadow.



THE WRECK OF THE STRATHMORE.

THE *Strathmore* sailed from Gravesend on the 1st of April with eighty-eight souls on board; her crew were on all hands allowed to be mutinous and unruly, but the weather more than their misconduct seems to have led to the terrible catastrophe which befell them. In the thick darkness of a foggy night the ship struck on the rocks, and it was very soon evident that the boats were the sole means of rescue; though several of them were found to be disabled, just half the living freight of the vessel managed to take refuge in them, a heavy sea actually floating one of the life-boats clean over the deck of the vessel clear of the wreck, with its crew of eighteen men and one lady, Mrs. Wordsworth, on board. This boat rowed about all night vainly seeking a harbour in the darkness; towards morning meeting the gig, which took it in tow and brought it half disabled through the seaweed to the shores of the desolate islet which was to be the home of the survivors for so long.

The captain and first mate with half the crew found a watery grave, but the second mate with three others returned in the gig to the ship, which, being jammed be-

tween two rocks, still kept above water, and took from the rigging as many as possible of the crew clinging to it, including a little boy of three years old, whose mother had already perished among the waves. Till daylight completely dawned it was not thought safe to make a second expedition for the rest of the survivors, but a promise was given them to return for them, and the whole of the remaining castaways were finally brought on shore, together with such few provisions and other useful articles as could be collected in a hurry; to wit, clothes, a case or two of wine and spirits, and several tins of confectionery, the tins proving of even more value than their contents in after days, being used as cooking vessels.

The island seems to have been a desolate place, devoid of trees, simply a refuge for sea-birds. Winter was coming on in these latitudes, and the cold was intense.

After a while huts were raised to shelter the new population, but the exertion of building them was very painful, says one of the passengers, owing to the excessive chill experienced by touching the stones. Still some defence from the weather was needful, and especially for the one lady of the party; and to the credit of humanity it must be told here, that the roughest and least manageable of the crew all united with the rest in endeavouring to soften the privations of Mrs. Wordsworth. While those in authority over them were forced to speak in no measured terms of their misconduct as sailors, she still "entertained a very high opinion of their behaviour towards her."

During the second night of residence on the island, while the men in charge were drunk and incapable, the boats broke loose and drifted away, leaving the unfortunate people literally prisoners on the barren rock. No more provisions could now be had from the vessel, nor could driftwood be collected for firing, the *Strathmore* very shortly breaking up into fragments and vanishing before the eyes of the crew.

To keep life together was now the whole aim of the poor creatures on the rock, who had naturally fallen into six camps or divisions. Sea-birds formed their chief food, albatrosses, mollyhawks, penguins, and such-like, the rank flesh proving so distasteful to Mrs. Wordsworth that the few biscuits saved from the wreck were appropriated solely to her use. The birds were cooked at first in the tins, and afterwards in hollow stones; the spirits and wine were served out in equal proportions, but the strong and unruly often deprived the weak of their shares. Of fresh water there was happily abundance on the island. Each day the little community wondered anxiously whether the scanty supply of daily food would be continued to them, and yet each night they lay down with hunger appeased, if not completely satisfied.

The birds did not fail, and after a while the penguin's eggs became a luxurious article of diet. Some green leaves like carrot-tops, a sort of cress, and a bitter kind of cabbage, helped to keep them in health. In a month's time the firewood failed, and then they burnt the skins of the birds, which served the purpose fairly well, the fat supplying a lamp which was kept continually burning, and which in the first instance was lighted by matches saved from the wreck. Clothes began to wear out and fall to shreds after a while, and they were replaced by penguin skins ingeniously stitched together by needles formed of the wires of an old parasol which had somehow been brought from the vessel; the thread was at first canvas ravellings, then strong grass. Shoes and caps were also constructed of the same unfailing material.

Ice and snow, rain and wind, however, chilled the poor exiles to the bone, and after a while the weaker among them pined away and died. The first night of