

The engineer smiled. "Sir, it is a water-turkey," he said gently.

The water-turkey is the most preposterous bird within the range of ornithology. He is not a bird ; he is a Neck, with such subordinate rights, members, appurtenances and hereditaments thereunto appertaining as seem necessary to that end. He has just enough stomach to arrange nourishment for his Neck, just enough wings to fly painfully along with his Neck, and just enough legs to keep his Neck from dragging on the ground ; and as if his Neck were not already pronounced enough by reason of its size, it is further accentuated by the circumstance that it is light-coloured, while the rest of him is dark.

When the water-turkey saw us he jumped up on a limb and stared. Then suddenly he dropped into the water, sank like a leaden ball out of sight, and made us think he was certainly drowned, when presently the tip of his beak appeared, then the length of his neck lay along the surface of the water, and in this position, with his body submerged, he shot out his neck, drew it back, wriggled it, twisted it, twiddled it, and spirally poked it into the east, the west, the north and the south with a violence of involution and a contortionary energy that made one think in the same breath of corkscrews and of lightning.

But what nonsense ! All that labour and perilous asphyxiation for a beggarly sprat or a couple of inches of water snake ! Yet I make no doubt this same water-turkey would have thought us as absurd as we him if he could have seen us taking *our* breakfast a few minutes later. For as we sat there, some half dozen men at table in the small cabin, all that sombre melancholy which comes over the average American citizen at his meals descended upon us. No man talked after the first two or three feeble sparks of conversation had gone out ; each of us could hear the other crunching his bread *in faucibus*, and the noise thereof seemed to me in the ghastly stillness like the noise of earthquakes and of crashing worlds. Even our furtive glances toward each other's plates were presently awed down to a sullen gazing of each into his own : the silence increased, the noises became intolerable, a cold sweat broke out over me. I felt myself growing insane, and rushed out to the deck with a sigh as of one saved from a dreadful death by social suffocation.

There is a certain position a man can assume on board the Marion which constitutes an attitude of perfect rest, and leaves one's body in such blessed ease that one's soul receives the heavenly influence of the voyage absolutely without physical impediment. Know, therefore, tired friends that shall hereafter ride up the Ocklawaha—whose name I would fain call Legion—that if you will place a chair just in the narrow passage-way which runs alongside the cabin, at the point where this passage-way descends by a step to the open space in front of the pilot-house, on the left-hand side as you face the bow, you will, as you sit down in your