

Anecdotes of Sharks.

HOW JIMMY FOLLOWED A DYING SAILOR—A SEVENTY-FOOT FISH—A NARROW ESCAPE.

Some twenty-five years ago, when the writer was returning from China to England, a mesquite of his, a young midshipman, hailing from Belfast, was taken ill of dysentery. The poor young fellow battled long with the fell disease, but though he possessed a vigorous constitution, and as brave a heart as any man I ever knew, he could not shake it off. During the last ten days of his illness it had been remarked that a huge shark followed the ship continuously; the ill-omened creature was first seen over the counter, on the same side of the ship where was the cabin in which young H—lay dying, and indeed just below it. Every one saw it; and officers and men had only to lean over the rail, and look long enough, and a dim, shadowy form could be seen moving stealthily deep down in the calm sea. Sometimes it disappeared for hours; and a hope was expressed that it had taken itself off. "But no," said one of the quartermasters, an ancient mariner, who had passed fifty years at sea, "the shark would not leave until it got what it had come for;" and the old salt jerked his head on one side to denote what he meant. The shark became the subject of daily discourse, both in the fore-cabin and on the quarter-deck, and its appearances were regularly chronicled. Sometimes it rose near the surface, and then sank low down, and looked more horrible in the deep stillness of the unfathomable sea. All this time the weather remained very calm, and we had scarcely any wind, though at night it sometimes freshened, only to die away in the morning.

At length H—died, after much suffering and a brave struggle against a hard fate. Within a few hours of his death this fine young fellow was buried with all the tokens of respect we could command.

That morning the shark was seen at his accustomed place under the counter, but after the funeral he was seen no more, and no one on board the ship, either forward or aft, could after this gain any observation of the old quartermaster: "I told you sir, he knew there was a dying man aboard us. You'll see no more of him; he's got what he wanted."

Entertaining this view it is not surprising that sailors regard the capture of a shark as an act of retributive justice; for even though the victim that has fallen into their hands may not have feasted on a live or dead seaman—which is extremely unlikely, as they never miss a chance of devouring human flesh—they look upon him as the representative of his race, and "serve him out" accordingly.

For several days some sharks had followed a ship off the Brazil coast, and, notwithstanding every effort the crew could not succeed in catching one. At length a shark suddenly made a snatch at the bait, and was soon plunging and lashing his tail in a most furious manner, as he found that he had got more than he bargained for. It was evident that he had taken the hook, and was so far secured, but still he was but half caught, as soon appeared. The men on deck "clapped on" to the line and very soon the creature was alongside, but he plunged and lashed about so furiously that it was found impossible to land him on the deck until he had somewhat exhausted his immense strength. To assist in effecting this the mate proposed to harpoon him, and in the absence of a proper instrument took the boat-hook, to which he attached a line. After a few attempts the mate succeeded in plunging the boat-hook in the fore part of the back, when the shark by a prodigious effort succeeded in snapping the line, and freeing himself from the hook, made off with the boat-hook sticking like a flagstaff out of his back. He remained in sight some little time, evidently feeling very uneasy, and then disappeared; but whether he succeeded in disengaging himself from this unwonted appendage could not be ascertained.

The shark is so voracious that, in pursuing its prey it will leap out of the water, and it also feeds on its own species. It has been said that on cutting open sharks smaller ones have been found inside; for this I cannot vouch from personal observation, though I have seen a very miscellaneous collection of articles extracted from the stomach, such as towels, tooth-brushes, shoes, hair newspapers and a rope's end. The shark will devour anything, and may be regarded as the scavenger of the sea, thus performing the same office as the vulture on land.

The shark produces its young from a sort of egg, the shell of which is brown, and re-

sembles leather; the eggs are of oblong shape, with tendrils curling from its corners. When the term of hatching is fulfilled, the end of the case is pushed out by the young shark, which measures seven or eight inches in length. The flesh is seldom eaten, even by sailors whose fare for months has been salt meat; the flavour is unpalatable, and the texture tough and fibrous. The Icelanders use the fat, which can be kept for a long time, in place of lard, and eat it with the prepared fish. The liver affords a good deal of oil, and in Greenland the skin is used for the construction of canoes. Shark's teeth are frequently dug up in fossil remains, and specimens have been found of which the enamelled portion was four and a half inches in length, from whence a geologist has calculated that the shark which owned this tooth must have exceeded seventy feet in length.

In the year 1831 an American ship, named the *Olympus*, anchored off the island of Bourbon, in the Indian Ocean, and some of the sailors obtained permission to go ashore and enjoy a walk after the day's work. Night was coming on, and the quartermaster on duty, tempted to indulge in a bath by the tranquillity of the scene and the delicious coolness of the water, undressed and jumped overboard from the gangway. The quartermaster was a good swimmer, and was soon some distance from the ship, oblivious of danger. But the cook, a negro, who was sitting in the main-chains cooling himself after his hot day's duty, chanced to spy the fin of a shark which was swimming near the surface of the water on the other side of the ship to that on which his shipmate was disappearing himself. His first impulse, after making sure what it was (for so large was the size he thought it must be a plank), was to call out and warn him of his danger, but it seemed he wisely determined not to do so lest the news might paralyze him with terror. So he quickly warned some of the sailors, and in little more than two minutes a small dingy suspended at the davits was lowered into the water, and the crew were pulling with might and main toward their comrade. Whether it was that only now the shark caught sight of the man in the water, or the noise of the boat attracted his attention in that direction, the huge fish turned and made toward the quartermaster, who, still unconscious of the fearful danger menacing him, continued to swim away with redoubled energy, as the quick click of the rowlocks warned him of the approach of his shipmates. Rescue would now have been misplaced, as, unless he was rescued within a few seconds, all would be over with him.

"Williams," shouted out the cockswain, "there are sharks near you; be quick—get into the boat, as you value your life."

Apprehending at length the full horror of his position, the quartermaster turned to the little boat, where alone was safety, a dingy being a powerful swimmer, was soon almost alongside. But the shark was upon him. "Quick! quick!" shouted his shipmates, while the bowman, glancing over his shoulder, throw in his oar, and, quick as thought, jumped up, boat-hook in hand, to try and help the struggling seaman.

"Way enough," shouted the cockswain, as the boat, impelled by stout arms, shot almost over the quartermaster, who, after a final effort, extended his arms to seize the gunwale of the boat, while two of the crew leaned over the side in order to help him out. But the shark was not to be thus easily balked of its anticipated prey, and as it was near enough to make its venture, darted half out of the water, exposing its prodigious length, and turned over on its side, opening its cavernous jaws. At that moment, when all appeared lost, the bowman, exerting all his strength (and it so happened that he was the most powerful man in the ship), plunged the boat-hook right into the mouth of the animal, which writhing in agony, fell back into the water, and snapped the weapon in two. Turning upon the boat in its fury, it lashed it with its tail with such terrible force that it started it forward. The sailors had just time to draw in their shipmate, when they they became aware of the new danger menacing all of them. The boat began to fill, when deliverance came from another quarter. Their cries for help (which, owing to the calmness of the evening, were audible at great distance) attracted the attention of the crew of a schooner anchored near the land, who quickly launched their long-boat, and made toward them.

The shark, lashing the water with fury and pain, appeared determined to exact revenge, and remained near the spot, waiting its prey; but it was again balked, for just as the little dingy was settling fast by

the head, the friendly long-boat arrived upon the scene. The crew, with Williams, were taken out of the sinking craft, and were soon on their way back to the ship, rejoicing their escape from a terrible death.

Greek Symbolism.

The decay of pagan belief was not, as Hegel imagines, due to the fact that Hellenic art was anthropomorphic. The gods ceased to be gods not merely because they became too like men, but because they became too like anything definite. If the ibis on the amulet or the owl on the terra cotta represents a more vital belief in the gods than does the Venus of Milo or the Giustiniani Minerva, it is not because the idea of divinity is more compatible with an ugly bird than with a beautiful woman, but because whereas the beautiful woman, exquisitely wrought by a consummate sculptor, occupied the mind of the artist and of the beholder with the idea of her beauty, to the exclusion of all else, the rudely-engraved ibis or the badly-modeled owl, on the other hand, served merely as a symbol, as the recaller of an idea; the mind did not pause in contemplation of the bird, but wandered off in search of the god; the goggle eyes of the owl and the beak of the ibis were soon forgotten in the contemplation of the vague, over-transmuted visions of phenomena of sky and light, of semi-human and semi-bestial shapes, of confused, half-embodied forces; in short, of the supernatural. But the human shape did most mischief to the supernatural merely because the human shape was the most absolute, the most distinct of all shapes; a god might be symbolized as a beast, but he could only be portrayed as a man; and if the portrait was correct, then the god was a man, and nothing more. Even the most fantastic among pagan supernatural creatures, those strange monsters who longest kept their original dual nature—the centaurs, satyrs, and tritons—became beneath the chisel of the artist mere abstractions from the normal, rare and curious types like certain fair-booth phenomena, but perfectly intelligible and rational; the very Chimera, who was to give her name to every sort of unintelligible fancy, became, in the bas-reliefs of the story of Bellerophon, a mere singular mixture between a lion and a dog, and a bird—a cross-breed which happens not to be possible, but which an ancient might well have conceived as adorning some distant zoological collection. How much more rationalized were not the divinities in whom only a peculiar shape of the eye, a certain structure of the leg, or a definite fashion of wearing the hair, remained of their former nature? Learned men, indeed, tell us that we need only to glance at Hera to see that she is at bottom a cow; at Apollo, to recognize that he is but a stag in human shape; or at Zeus, to recognize that he is, in point of fact, a lion. Yet it remains true that we need only walk down the nearest street to meet 10 ordinary men and women who look more like various animals than do any anti-quar divinities, and who can yet never be said to be in really cows, stags, or lions. The same applies to the violent efforts which are constantly being made to show in the Greek and Latin poets a distinct recollection of the cosmic nature of the gods, constructing the very human movements, looks, and dress of the divinities into meteorological phenomena, as has been done even by Mr. Ruskin in his "Queen of the Air," despite his artist's sense, which should have warned him that no artistic figure, like Homer's divinities, can possibly be at the same time a woman and a whirlwind.

She Snubbed Them

A plainly dressed little lady from San Francisco recently appeared at a California watering place and was snubbed by all the ladies. She sent home for her best dresses and all her diamonds. After her trunks arrived she went to breakfast in a magnificent morning dress made by Worth, profusely ornamented with diamonds, and her two little children were dressed in the height of fashion. Everybody seemed anxious to make amends for past slights, but she was extremely distant to one and all. She cut them in this way for a week, then packed up her nine Saratoga trunks and sent them home, and resumed her plain and comfortable vacation clothes.

A boy was carrying two pounds of powder and a fuse in a cigar box, at Gibraltar, Pa. The end of the fuse protruded, and a practical joker was at hand to light it. The explosion killed the boy.

SCIENTIFIC GOSSIP.

ONE kind of paper is made in China from the paper mulberry tree bark, and another kind from a mixture of that bark and wheat straw.

THE Syonan and Orenburg Railway bridge across the River Volga, Russia, which is just finished, cost \$6,000,000. Where the bridge is built the river is more than a mile wide. The 14 piers which support the girders are 100 feet above the main level of the water, and the girders are 304 feet long and 20 feet wide.

THE date of the earliest eclipse of the sun, recorded in the annals of the Chinese, when "on the first day of the last month of Autumn the sun and moon did not meet harmoniously in Fang," or in that part of the heavens defined by two stars in the constellation of the Scorpion, has been determined by Prof. Von Oppolzer, of Vienna, to have been the morning of Oct. 22, 2137 B.C.

M. LORTZ has called the attention of the French Academy of Sciences to a heretofore unnoticed, but an apparently very ancient, station of the stone age. It is situated near Hanawob, a place not far from Tyro in Syria. A very large number of rudely formed flints, as well as a great many fragments of bones and teeth, are there found in a kind of conglomerate or osseous-breccia.

THE wool crop of the world has increased five times since 1830, when it was about 320,000,000 pounds in weight. In 1878—the latest year for which there are complete figures—Europe produced 740,000,000, River Plate 240,000,000, United States 208,000,000, Australia 350,000,000 and South Africa 48,000,000 pounds, making a total of 1,586,000,000 pounds. Great Britain and France consume each about the same quantity of wool—350,000,000 a year. Germany consumes about 165,000,000 pounds; United States, 250,000,000 pounds, and Russia, Austria, and other countries, 400,000,000 pounds.

THERE are, or have lately been, on exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland, samples of leather prepared with chrome, and without the use of any tanning whatever. It is claimed that the chrome process, invented and patented by a Dr. Heizerling, is not only cheaper and more expeditious than the usual methods of tanning, but that it produces a leather "stronger, more durable, more pliant, and less pervious to moisture." The chrome-tanned leather exhibited was made into belting, harness, boots, and other articles; and it may be well to suggest that our leather manufacturers should scrutinize what may be learned regarding the results, and if the report is favourable it will go hard with our inventors, but they will better the improvement.

An Edison Romance.

MR. Edison as the hero of a romance now publishing in a Paris paper, is shown sitting in the workshop at his elegant mansion, wrapped in a black velvet dressing gown with tassels of violet silk. Resting beside him on a velvet cushion is the left hand and arm, just severed from her body, of a beautiful young woman; and near him a powerful electric battery. On the delicate wrist of the young woman's arm is a gold enamel viper, and on her finger a sapphire ring, the hand holding a dainty pearl gray glove. As the story is entitled "The New Eve," it is supposed that Edison is about to create a woman with the arm instead of a rib as a "starter." One of the incidents represents Edison sitting on a bank smoking a choice cigar and watching two trains armed with a new brake of his, designed to stop them instantaneously and without a shock. The engineers becoming excited bangle at the brakes, bringing about a collision in which several hundred are killed. At this, the gifted inventor, throwing away his cigar, impatiently remarks, "Clumsy! stupid!" It is plain that very little is really known about Edison in this country.

A Disappointed Debtor.

The train had started off. A young man rushed breathless in. "Got left, did you?" "Well, ain't I here?" he responded. Then one said he could go across the bridge and catch it, and another told him when the next train would go, and made various suggestions. The chap looked at the disappearing train a few seconds, when somebody asked, "Where were you going?" Then the wicked fellow said, "Oh, I wasn't going in it, but there was a fellow in the train to whom I promised to pay a bill."