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The Seagulls' Warning.

(' Friendly Greetings. ')

The outward-bound ship was steaming past the Scilly Isles, and oh! how fair the scene was. True, there were frowning, jagged rocks on every side, but what mattered that on such a bright summer's day? There was no cloud in the sky; hardly was there a ripple on the blue sea as it gently laved the shore. As the vessel rounded the headlands there might be seen on the slopes the flowers so carefully cultivated for the less favored parts of England, and flying from the ledges of the cliff, scores and scores of seabirds filling the air with their wild cries and screams.

'Tis perfectly deafening,' said one of the

nearing Scilly; tempests meanwhile had been hurling the stormy waves over the rocks; boats had gone down, and fishermen's lives, too, into these dangerous wintry waters. But just now there was no storm and sailors were looking forward to 'land ahead' in the shape of their own firesides and cottage homes. All seemed prosperous, but then there came—the fog. It dropped like a blanket on the sea, and soon wrapped everything in wet, white mist, so that it was impossible to tell which way to steer. And the rocks—those cruel rocks might be, for aught they could tell, right in front of them. How could they go on? But how dreary to wait for hours, or perhaps days, till the fog lifted.

Anxiously the captain tried to pierce the

launched forth with flapping wings and vociferous voices.

'The birds, and nothing else have saved us,' said the men, as away from the dangerous channels of Scilly they found themselves in the open sea.

We know not whether the same passengers were on board, but if they were we hope they told each other:—'Yes, we were wrong; the birds are good for something, after all. God has given them work to do for man, and they have done it.'

Nor is this a solitary case. All along our coasts, when a fog comes on and no lighthouse can be visible, both fishermen and sailors bless the birds which warn them that danger is near.

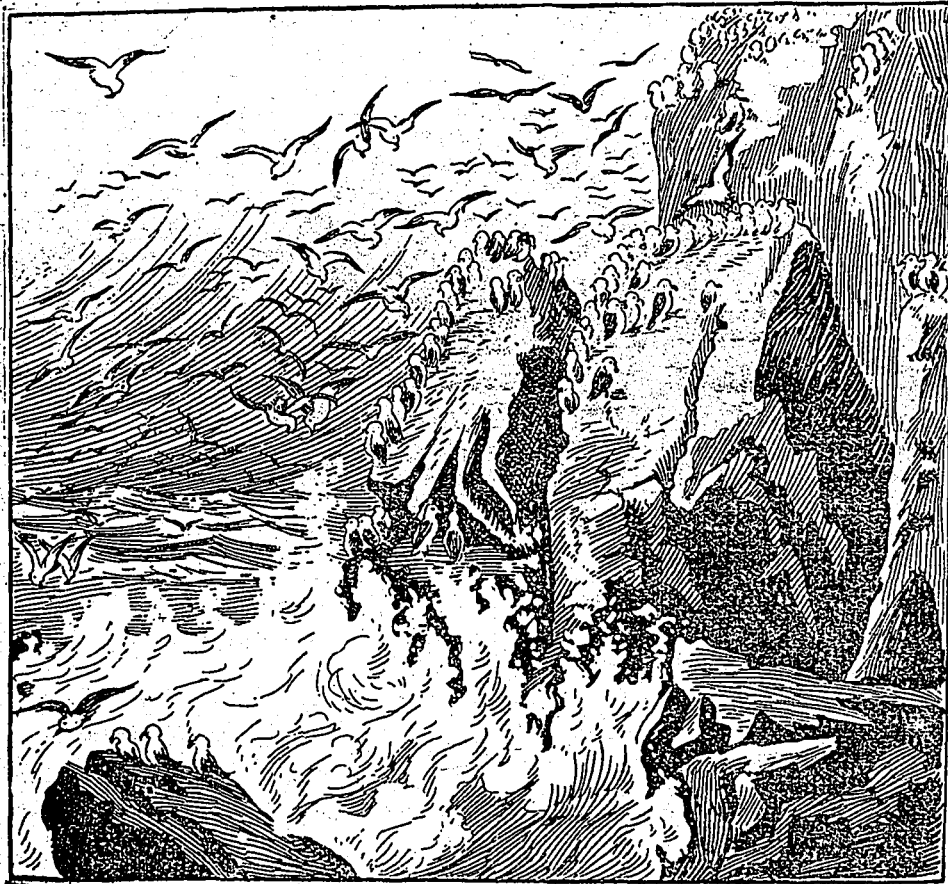
'He's no friend to we who kills a seagull, I reckon,' said one of them; and we hope you will never do so, but will not fail to remember 'The Seagulls' Mission.'

Public Untidiness.

Tidiness within the house is valued by the home makers of no nationality more highly than by those of our own. Among both French and English once you pass the threshold you may count on finding everything in good order, both neat and clean. It is all the more surprising therefore to find among people of almost all classes such a defective sense of tidiness in reference to almost all things that meet the eye outside the house. It is characteristic alike of town and country.

How seldom, for example, do we find our streets and roadways kept in such a condition as to please the eye, to say nothing of the comfort of those who are compelled to use them. In the country the ditches, when there are any, are unkempt and irregular, allowed to grow up with all manner of weeds and thistles, and the margins strewn with stones and rubbish. The fences are rickety and irregular, with no attempt at neatness or at anything else save the barest utility. In the towns and villages, and even in the cities, loose papers and other refuse are allowed to lie where the wind leaves them at its sweet will. The foot paths are allowed to become rough and uneven, an offence to the eye as well as a danger to life and limb. Sometimes an effort is made to beautify the streets and highways by means of boulevards and trees. But not infrequently the interest in them seems to be exhausted with the first effort to arrange them, and they show a sad lack of the constant care needed to make them a real pleasure.

Another thing that strikes a traveller through the country is the lack of paint on almost all buildings, public and private. In many parts of the United States, where wooden buildings are the rule, these are kept in good condition by frequent coats of paint that at the same time gives them an ever fresh appearance. The French-Canadians make a free use of white wash, which is far better than nothing. But how commonly does one see whole villages in which paint seems to be altogether unknown or used only when the houses are first erected. This is one of the things which create the impression that our country is slow and behind the age. It gives the appearance of decay as if the places were deserted or the people on the point of leaving for perma-



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—SPEAK!

passengers on board, putting his fingers in his ears to shut out the noise of the tumult. 'Was there ever such a babel? why, we can't hear each other speak.'

'Yes,' replied his companion; 'I only wish I had my gun, and I'd soon make havoc among them. Whatever can be the use of them, I'd like to know. Nobody cares to eat them, and, if they can't sing, at any rate nature need not have given them such harsh discordant voices. Well, I suppose they cling to these ugly rocks, and will not follow us.'

On went the good ship, and soon both the seabirds and the Scilly Isles were left far behind.

But the time came for the same vessel to wend her course homewards. Whither she went and how long the period that elapsed history does not say. At any rate it was the Christmas season when she was again

darkness—for night was coming on—but all in vain. They must stay where they were with such unknown perils before them. So the engines were stopped, and all was quiet save the heaving of the vessel in the long swell of the Atlantic. In the freezing cold and the awful stillness men waited as those who felt themselves between life and death.

Suddenly at last the silence was broken by a chorus weird and wild—of cries and screams. 'Uncanny,' said the sailors; but the captain's heart went up with a bound, for he knew the signal: it was the seagulls' warning of 'rocks ahead.'

In a moment the engines were reversed, the ship ploughed its way backward, and presently a rift in the fog showed how they had been drifting straight to destruction. Of course the birds on the ledges of the cliffs had been disturbed by the working of the paddles, and so the whole flock had