

The Keeper's Daughter

For days the thermometer had been soaring at almost midsummer heat, softening the ice of the Great South bay, until nearly all its cohesive power was gone. Now the ice was a thick spongy mass, so rotten that even the foot of a life-saver pressing upon it firmly would break through at many places. It was impossible for either foot passage of for a boat to be forced through. And to increase the seriousness of the case the last two days had brought a fog so gray and dense as to shut Fire Island from every object a dozen yards away.

Out in midchannel toward the Long Island shore, and on the ocean side, currents had kept the ice from freezing thickly and had hastened the decomposition. Already the delayed shipping was seeking passages toward New York or the open sea, and in the fog and the narrow channels that were free from ice were meeting with disaster, from time to time signals of distress came from one direction or another, and so far as they were able the life-saving stations of Fire Island responded.

Perhaps at no other place in the world could assistance have been rendered across that barrier of slush ice, in which spaces of open water were beginning to appear, but then at no other place in the world perhaps were there amphibious scooters.

Several of these unique distinctions of Fire Island were lying on the edge of the ice, with pike and scooping iron and oars across the thwart ready for instant use while their owners leaned forward listening, peering and for the most part shaking their heads. The wind was rising, blowing straight from the sea. In another hour it was likely to freshen into a gale. Before it the gray fog was being whirled and tossed and eddied, but still encompassing and dense—a huge wet blanket that seemed writhing to the agonies of pain.

On all sides were the sounds of fog and danger, bell buoys, boat whistles, occasional fog horns, the pounding and crushing ice where some vessel was forcing its way through, and now and then the ominous signal of distress and call for help. Among these came a sudden, dull booming that seemed to come from the ice itself, a sound that was not a call for help, but a warning of danger.

"Yes," assented the man nearest him, "but it can get to you that far out, but even scooters can't get there. A scooter is a good sound near the ice, but a scooter is a bad sound when it's out in the open. The other fellows are yet to be asked."

Only Carey. He brought a man ashore and sent him up to the station, and then hurried back. He said it was a coal barge, with two men and a boy and a dog, and the other scooters will bring them in. The keeper ordered us to watch here for other work. "What was yours?"

"Just a sailboat, with two young men. They called for help because they didn't know their surroundings. When I explained they decided to remain on board until the ice let them out. They have plenty of provisions and a snug little cabin. I heard the ship's call from outside and hurried back. I couldn't quite make out the location in the fog. Anybody gone?"

"Gone?" drowsily. "Why, man alive! That's on the bar three miles away. No scooter could ever get there, across the open channel. Besides the ice has been puffed up by the waves. She'll have to wait until the sea opens so we can use a lifeboat, or the fog lifts so we can scooter out. No one—where are you going?"

For the man had swung the bow of his craft into the fog and was again hoisting the sails. "Out to the vessel, of course?"

"But it's sure death, Jack," remonstrated the life saver sharply. "Don't be a fool. You couldn't pick your way through the fog with that scooter and get back alive."

"Maybe not. But that signal sounds like a big boat, and if so there are a good many folks out there waiting for help. I'm only one."

"Oh, Mr. Bowman!" The call was clear and peremptory. Jack Bowman paused, with one foot in the scooter, his face growing set. The owner of the voice was the keeper's daughter, and only the day before she had closed the door into a future which he had begun to believe would be his. The sentence, "I shall never marry a man whose future is bounded by a clam hoe and a fish tawl; the world has use for brave deeds," still rang in his ears.

"Father says for no one to answer that call just yet. He thinks this wind will soon break up the ice so that the lifeboat can go out. He says it will be unsafe to attempt scooting through this fog. Mr. Bowman!" her voice rising in sudden displeasure, for the scooterist had stepped into his craft and thrown out his pike to shove her into the wind.

"I'm sorry, Miss Blanche," over his shoulder, "but the keeper's daughter are for his own good, and not for a poor outside fisherman like me. Besides, the boat may be in some need and though a little scooter cannot do much, it may at least carry intelligence and perhaps save one or two, provided I can reach them."

The girl's face underwent a sudden change, and she took an impetuous step forward, but already the scooter had slipped away into the fog.

As they waited there, listening, peering, while the hours dragged by, the faces of the men showed some thing of what they knew to be taking place within the fearsome, shifting pall of mist. The scooter was rushing on, dropping into open spaces of water, slipping up again upon patches of rotten ice, swifter, with scarcely any checking of speed, its owner knowing that time was of more importance than caution. Any moment its nose was liable to strike some obstruction and throw out its occupant; the wind at that speed might overturn the scooter, or a sudden jolting wreck it without an instant's warning, either of which on the waste of rotten ice held but one possible fate for the owner.

Two hours and there came another signal of distress close in shore. The waiting life-savers dropped into their scooters and slid out into the fog. The girl was still there watching, her face white. Ten minutes more, and a scooter's nose suddenly slipped from the darkness, almost at her feet, and Jack Bowman sprang out. Bending over, he lifted a re-splendent figure from the scooter to the sand.

"Will you call someone from the station to carry this man up, Miss Blanche?" he said hurriedly, as he swung his craft back into the wind. "I haven't time. There are others waiting for me."

The girl moved forward swiftly, placing a hand upon his shoulder. "I'll be waiting, too, Jack," she said in a low voice. "You must come back to me."

A tremor went through the man's frame, but he did not pause for an instant in his work. As the craft disappeared in the fog his voice rose strong and resolute above the wind. "Yes, Blanche, I will go back to you."

And he did.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Stars of the Harem.

The members of the harem are still young slaves bought in Circassia, Georgia, Armenia, and other places, and practically educated in the harem itself. The chance that the Sultan may one day notice them writes a Constantinople correspondent of a London paper that appears also that the harem has not made great strides in the management of the royal harem, and that corporal punishments are still frequent, especially beating, and that the harem is still a place of fear and terror.

Before the Time of Matches.

Sixty years ago the use of flint and steel to produce a fire was not wholly unknown. The late William E. Stone of St. Paul lived at Beaver, Pa. His father one warm August night was stricken with apoplexy. The fire was out in the kitchen hearth and his mother in her distress, unable to find the tinder box, was obliged to send his brother-in-law two miles and a half to a neighbor. She gave him a handful of tow, which he put in his pocket. Arriving a neighbor with some difficulty, she gave him a live coal, which he wrapped in the tow, and putting it back in his pocket, ran home. When he arrived there he swung the tow around his head, thus fanned the coal and produced a flame which he held in his hand. In the meantime the father had been so long coming that the father was past all surgery.

Tibetan Trade in Musk.

A number of Tibetan traders who visited Calcutta in March, 1908, brought with them, among other articles, a large quantity of musk, which is held in high esteem by the high-caste Indians. The little deer from which the musk is obtained ranges in the Himalayas and Tibetan mountains, 9,000 feet above sea level. The male deer yields the finest and greatest quantity of musk. The deer are shy and alert, and difficult to capture.

Parisian Horse Markets.

The famous old horse market in the Boulevard de l'Hopital in Paris, where Rosa Bonheur used to plod about in man's attire with pencil and sketch book, has ceased to exist. No one who loves horses will regret it, for it represented the acme of equine discomfort. The new horse market, in the Rue Brancion, is a model of the kind. It comprises stables and sheds sufficient to shelter 800 horses.

What is Whisky?

The trial of a case that involved the important question, "What is whisky?" greatly interested the British. It presents many problems. "Suppose," asked one of the counsel, "that a merchant has a blend of spirit three months old and spirit ten years old, what is the age of that whisky?" "Five years and a half," replied the witness.

Sheep on the Sierra.

The Lonely Sheep Tenders of the California Sierra.

There are few lonelier lives in the world than those lived by shepherds on the high meadows of the California Sierra. All alone they follow their sheep, seeing no one for many months of the year but the sheep, their dogs and perhaps an occasional very occasional traveler. Probably this solitude drives up the springs of speech, for they are said to be very silent when they do encounter any one.

One of these strange men is a Basque from the Pyrenees. A lean, dark visaged, rugged fellow, he is now and then overtaken by some wanderer in the mountains. Along the trail before him his sheep feed. His monstrous outfit hangs at his heels. He may raise his stick in mute salutation; he may stoop by without a sign. Yet this account being his one sign—his cue. His movements are carrying quiet sheep buckles out of boots. Every hand has its bell, and about whose neck hangs a bell. The bell depends from a leather collar, and it is the buckle of these collars that this old Basque shepherds and some of these other Sierra shepherds make in the course of their lonely days. Sometimes a buckle represents a summer's work, for some of them are very elaborate. Some are in the semblance of skulls or eagles, some have the monograms of the sheep owners or of the shepherds in curious designs. All are patently cut, hit by bit, with the pocket-knife of the shepherd.

Plant Protection.

Plants are said to protect themselves much the same as do insects, says the Philadelphia Record. One of the uses of the sensitive plant is to frighten troublesome animals. A venturouse, browsing creature coming too near is evidently afraid to touch a plant so decidedly aggressive. The squirting cucumber of the Mediterranean alarm goats and cattle by discharging its ripe fruits actively in their faces the moment the stem is touched. The cucumber contains a pungent juice that discharges itself into the eye of its opponent, and the resultant smarting sensation is difficult of endurance.

The Salty Grass of Farnassus.

The Salty grass of Farnassus is beautiful, but disagreeable. It is a bog herb, has glossy green leaves, pure white blossoms, and is supposed to be the poet's lover. Within its milk white flowers lurk the elements of a scorpion, for the drops of honey that the bee and insects fancy they see in the petals are in reality solid, sticky imitations of the real thing. The flower feeds the bee in this way so that it may carry the pollen to other blossoms, whereas the kind may be perpetuated.

Some Troubles of a Planter.

Harold Bauer, the young planter who recently received such an enthusiastic welcome in America, has had some curious experiences during his travels.

While playing in Barcelona he was challenged to fight a duel by an excited member of the audience whom he had reproved for disturbing the recital by his noisy conduct. On another occasion, in Italy, he had to be carried through an underground tunnel to escape the attentions of frantic admirers.

One of his most extraordinary experiences was in Russia. It was in a little town near Moscow and in the middle of his performance the pianist was arrested by the police on the grounds that he was obtaining money under false pretenses. The police action was based on the grounds that a Hungarian dance appeared on the program and that there were no dancers. They overlooked the terrible fact that Mr. Bauer had played two marches without a single soldier being present.

Isle of Wight.

The tale of Wight inhabitants are not alone in speaking of "going to England" when they leave their own fragment of the kingdom. A patriotic Cornishman also "goes to England" when he crosses the Tamar. Similarly, inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula talk of "going to Europe" when they leave their own corner of the continent in curious contrast with the people of Great Britain. They regard themselves as both of and in "Europe," and accordingly it is only "the continent" that they visit. The record in the splendid isolation line is probably held by that minister of the Cumbraes, in the Clyde, who prayed for a blessing upon "the inhabitants of Great and Little Cumbrae and the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland."

First War with England.

China's first war with England occurred in 1839, when the Chinese government attempted to stop the importation of opium into the country by the East India company. The opium trade had grown from 4100 chests in 1798 to 30,000 chests in 1837, and was therefore, a most important revenue to the British company. The British sent her warships over and achieved various successes with both land and naval forces, and war terminated in the treaty of Nanking which gave England the island of Hong Kong, opened the Chinese ports to British trade, and exacted a war indemnity of \$21,000,000 from China.

Sugar Production Restricted.

The three leading sugar refineries of Japan have put up \$245,000 gold as a guarantee to an agreement that their combined production would be restricted to 275,000 tons.

The Magnetic Needle.

Influence that Draw it from the Attraction to the Magnetic Pole.

Nothing in the navigational equipment of a ship has been the subject of more anxious scientific research or received more jealous care than the mariner's compass, says the Wisconsin Magazine.

The popular notion of the compass needle always pointing north and south is well more inaccurate than even popular notions usually are. Even under the most favorable conditions there are only certain places upon the surface of the earth where the compass needle does point north and south, and it is quite safe to say that such conditions are never found on board of any ship.

But we must go further and say that no nearly unfavorable position could be found for a compass than on board a modern steamer, which is a complicated mass of steel, all tending to draw the compass needle from the alignment in the magnetic pole of the earth, varying influences which must needs be counteracted by all sorts of devices which render the instrument by an invisible wall of counteracting or neutral magnetism.

And as if this were not enough there are now being dynamo to be reckoned with, producing electric currents for all sorts of purposes on board. In the midst of these magnetic currents the poor little compass needle, upon which the mariner depends for his guide across the trackless deep, hangs suspended like some paralyzing saint surrounded by legions of devils.

Do You Know.

That pearls are measured by the "grain." Three and one-half grains go to a carat.

That for a General to reach to full length, an average of seven twelfths of an inch, from 121 to 128 days of growth are necessary.

That at 4 o'clock in the afternoon in the latest hour of the twenty-four hour day, the sun is at its lowest point.

That during the past three centuries more than two hundred different systems of shorthand have been devised. Pitman's was first published in 1817.

That it takes fifty of the Chinese edible birds' nests to weigh a pound and the price per pound is about \$50.

That February holds the record on the earth for the least number of hours of light.

That the sixth wife of King Robt. and parrot very rarely drink. A parrot lives fifty-two years without drinking a drop of water.

That the largest room in the world under one roof and unbroken by pillars is in St. Petersburg. It is 120 feet long by 110 feet in breadth. By daylight it is used for military displays, and a whole battalion can completely maneuver in it. By night 20,000 was camped in it a beautiful appearance. The roof is a single arch of trop.

Chinese History.

Chinese history dates back to 2677 B. C. when the people were made up of tribes and were ruled by a sovereign who was chosen by his subjects as the one most worthy to rule. This was followed by the feudal system, which continued for nearly twenty centuries and was similar to the feudal system in Europe in medieval times. By 475 B. C. China was divided into seven great states, each state was contending for the supremacy. In 221 B. C. the King of Tsin, who was victorious and he became the ruler of China, and with his reign the present imperial form of government was founded. The great wall was erected in 214 B. C. to about 1500 miles long with a breadth of twenty-five feet at the base and fifteen feet at the top. The wall varies from 200 to thirty feet.

Gymnastics of the Eye.

It is too long that patients and surgeons are gymnastics of the eye, by training to the position and control of its function. There is no statute like this living man, with his finite advantage over all other creatures of perfect variety. What a gallery of eyes! I have seen no man's eyes that were not perfect and diverse original single eyes. Here is the most himself employing, arms and glad at his work. Now one thought strikes him, say another, and with each thought he alters the whole eye, its attitude and expression of his clay. Away with you, you creature of all the senses! of marble, and of clay, except to open your eyes to the hypocritical or the real, they are hypocritical rabbits. — Ralph Waldo Emerson.

An Advertisement.

The skyscraper has at last reached the height of its glory. I have just returned from a trip to the city of New York, where I have seen the most magnificent view of the city from the sixty-sixth floor of the Skynny hotel. "Yes," replied the man who lived on the 12th floor, "though less than 40 years old I have already visited every floor of this building." — Kansas City Times.

Force of Habit.

An Atchison man married a school teacher, and he says that for three years whenever the school bells would ring she would act up like the horses at the fire department when the fire whistle blows. — Atchison Globe.

Like Legal Tender

A package of Uneeda Biscuit is always a fair exchange for its cost, because Uneeda Biscuit are the best of all crackers. They are not expensive, on the contrary, Uneeda Biscuit is one of the least expensive of foods. There is no waste. There is most refreshment. Always fresh and crisp. Never stale. No broken crackers. Always whole and inviting. There can be no better soda crackers than

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