

LIVING IN A SEA-CUCUMBER.

The Curious Fish Which Exist Inside an Animated Lodging-House.

In walking along the half-submerged fringing reef of the Tortugas group of islands my attention was attracted by numbers of great, black, worm-like creatures strewn over the bottom just within the breakers. They were *Holothurians*, or sea-cucumbers. The sea-cucumber looks like a great, grotesque caterpillar, made out of leather and filled with water, and handling causes it to eject two streams of water with considerable force. After placing one of them upon the seat of the boat, we found that the creature had ejected all of its interior organs—actually thrown them off. This would have been a grievous calamity to almost any animal except a sea-cucumber; but they have the faculty of reproducing lost parts to a wonderful degree, and if placed back in the water would soon provide themselves with an entirely new set.

If kept for a long time without food, a ring will be formed about the tail which grows deeper and deeper, until finally the piece drops off. In a short time another ring appears and another piece is sacrificed—a most remarkable operation, you will say, "but quite ingenious when we understand it. The animal is merely retrenching, and as the food supply becomes smaller and smaller, portions of the body are thrown off, so that there will not be so much to feed, until at last the sea-cucumber will sacrifice its entire body to save the mouth or head, and finally this dies. I caught one and put it in a glass jar. Being a large animal, it had soon exhausted the air in the water, and twisted its body deliberately about to show its discomfort, for the sea-cucumber and all other water animals require air just as much as ourselves. For several moments the sea-cucumber writhed about in its lazy fashion, when, all at once, out of one end I saw peeping a curious, delicate head.

A moment later it was still further out—a transparent, shining fish, and soon, with a convulsive wriggle, it freed itself from its strange prison and swam about a moment, then settled to the bottom. Its body was so delicate and transparent that print could almost be read through it, and a specimen that I have before me now, though shrunk and hardened in alcohol for several years, is still almost like glass.

But how did the fish get in the sea-cucumber? This was, at first, a puzzle, and to ascertain whether it was accidental or not, we collected a large number of cucumbers (*Holothuria floridiana*), and in nearly every case, as soon as the animal had exhausted the air in our aquarium, the silvery, eel-like flesher—for this is the fish's name—would come wriggling out, swim about for a moment as if dizzied and bewildered, and then sink to the bottom and die. It was evident that the fish was not eaten by the holothurian, and probably plain that the fish was not adapted for the outside world. Hence, we assumed that the flesher was a boarder in the cucumber, and such is really the case. Though I made many experiments, the fish could never be induced to return to its home, though freshly aerated water was constantly supplied. The conclusion that seemed most tenable was highly improbable, and so the puzzle remained until it was solved by the curator of the great aquarium at Naples, Italy.

He found that his sea cucumbers were also inhabited by a flesher, and, by carefully watching them, he saw the fishes come out and return. In the large tank the fishes ventured out, swam around, and probably fed, and finally returned; and here is probably the most remarkable part of it. Instead of returning head first, as you would naturally expect, the flesher slipped, not its head, but the tip of its tail into the orifice. In a moment the sea-cucumber relaxed to draw in water, and the cunning fish slipped in an inch, then rested; another relaxation by the cucumber, and another inch gained, and so on, until, to the amazement of the Italian naturalist, the flesher disappeared, tail first, within the very accommodating animal. The flesher then is a boarder in the sea-cucumber, a tenant that not only lives upon its host without pay, but does not hesitate to attack it when hungry. This has been proved by Prof. Semper, who found pieces of the water-jug of the living hotel in the stomach of the boarder; but, as we have seen, the former is able to reproduce lost parts, and probably does not suffer. The boarder also undoubtedly feeds upon food taken by its host.—Prof. Holden, in *Golden Days*.

Strange Playfellow.

The following account of the remarkable friendship between the elephant "Queen" and little Don Melville is taken from the article by John R. Corry in *St. Nicholas*: "When he could just toddle, Don would run up to Queen with a chuckle of delight, and putting his white, plump little arms around her great brown, hairy trunk, would tug away with all his little strength, as if he believed he could pull that living mountain over."

"And, strange to say, he actually accomplished his object, for Queen humored the little fellow's fancy. Swaying and rumbling with delight, she would gradually allow herself to come to her knees, and finally to fall over on her side. And it was touching to see how all the time she kept her eyes lovingly on the beautiful baby, taking care that no movement of hers should even disturb him!"

"When she was at last prostrate, Don would look around as if to say, "See what I can do!" Then he would imitate what he had seen the trainer perform. He would clamber and climb until he was on Queen's head, and there he would sit, with the air of a conqueror. He was quite likely to thrust his little fist into the elephant's eye or to swing his foot into her mouth, but not a motion would the patient creature make while he sat there, for she seemed to know that he was not very secure in his high perch."

"Some mes Don would carry his picture-blocks to Queen, and together they would build houses. Don would put on one block, and then Queen would take one up in her trunk and put it in its place as carefully as if she had

been used to the game all her life; and when Don would kick the house down, as he usually did when it was about half built, her merry laugh and her thunder-like rumble were something worth going miles to hear.

"It never seemed to occur to Don that there was anything odd in his companionship with the gigantic creature; and had it entered his little head to do so, there is no doubt that he would have proposed a walk in the fields with her, with as much innocence as if she had been a small dog."

"Coen Los," Shuah.

"Doggone dis coon hain't los' hisself, shuah!" was the exclamation that saluted the ears of a Detroit business man as he was passing up Jefferson avenue on his way to the Brush street depot. Looking up, he discovered the "lost lamb" in the person of a very black man, over whose face doubt, perplexity, and interrogation were alternately struggling for expression.

"Where do you wish to go?" asked the gentleman.

"To the depot, boss. Yer see, I've cook on a pahlah cab, an' I come up hyah totin some cloes. De man said I should go down to some street—I done forgit er it was Badwatah or Backwatah, leastwise it was some kind o' watah—an' I be doggone if I hain't hunted in de daah to' dat street mcre'n a hou'ah, tell I reckon I done loss de street, de depot, an' myse', too."

The gentleman piloted the perplexed individual to the depot, and as they reached the corner of Atwater street, the face of the "lost one" lighted up as he exclaimed: "By golly, I done passed dis hyar cawnah 'bout free minutes ago. 'Spec'd de lectrum light mus' ha' bin blown out. Reckon dey hain't much 'count nohow findin' streets in de daah, and the sable stranger headed for his "pahlah cab," which he discovered standing on the track, after offering profuse thanks to the man who piloted him "out of the wilderness," and expressing his contempt for "lectrum lights" as street illuminators in the most pronounced terms.—Detroit paper.

How Mexico's Popular Beverage Was Discovered.

Somewhere about the year 990—so the legend runs—a Toltec Indian, whose name was Papantzin, was the first to discover that the juice of the maguey (*Agave Americana*, better known to us as also or "century plant") might be distilled into a beverage fit for the gods. Desiring to bring this new blessing into royal favor, he called his only daughter—Xochitl, signifying "the flower" and commissioned her as cup-bearer to the King. This ancient Hebe, we are told, was young and beautiful, and the monarch not only drank, and praised the pulque, but wedded the maiden; and to this day the beverage of old Papantzin—who was no doubt called "Pap" by his dutiful children—is the universal beverage of the lower classes in Mexico. Maguey is as much of a feature of this country as trees are of the United States. All over the land it flourishes, cultivated with care in many places, growing out of bare rocks on the mountain side, and springing up as a weed in the waterless deserts. It has an infinite variety of uses, and is to the Mexican Indian what the reindeer is to the Esquimaux or the rice-plant to the Chinaman. —Cor. *Pittsburgh Dispatch*.

The Cathedral in Mexico.

The great cathedral in the City of Mexico is the largest in America, and cost nearly \$2,000,000. It was commenced by the Spaniards in 1573, on the site of the old Aztec temple, or pyramid, and finished in 1667. Its facade is beautifully carved. Against its western wall leans the celebrated Calendar Stone, covered with hieroglyphics and weighing twenty-five tons. Its cast, which the Mexican government is at present engaged in taking, will be exhibited at the New Orleans Exposition. Within the cathedral are a number of paintings, some of them said to be the work of Murillo.

Against Light and Knowledge.

Smith—Beastly headache I have this morning! Too many brandies and soda last night, I'm afraid. Brown—Don't feel up to much myself; had lobster salad for supper and haven't slept a wink. Jones—Well, just look at the frightful cold I caught last night. Brown—Why, where were you? Jones—At the health exhibition. Smith and Brown (together)—Why, so was I. [All groan]—London *Fun*.

Mrs. L. E. HILLIS, of Elgin, Ill., has a copy of the well known poem: "Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?" in the handwriting of Abraham Lincoln. She was once a member of a concert company, which chance to put up at the same hotel with Mr. Lincoln in a Western town, when he was a candidate for the Presidency. In the evening the singers entertained the company in the parlor for a time, and then called upon Mr. Lincoln. "My friends," said he, "I couldn't sing a tune, not even 'Old Hundred,' if it were to save my life, but I can recite a poem for you." Then stepping to the other side of the parlor that he might face them all, he said: "I will recite to you what I consider one of the finest productions of the English language," and then in an impressive manner recited the poem. As Mr. Lincoln was leaving the room after his recitation, Mrs. Hillis asked him who the author of the poem was and where it could be found. Lincoln replied that he did not know. "But," he added, "if you wish it will write you a copy of it." The next morning while Mrs. Hillis was eating her breakfast, Lincoln handed her the copy he had promised. It was written on an old-fashioned blue legal paper.

FRUIT pickers have adapted glass jars for putting up fruit. They claim that owing to the habit of unscrupulous dealers of putting up decayed and inferior fruit in tin, it became necessary for their own protection that they should use a transparent vessel, through which the contents can be seen. The glass jars are about one cent, more costly than the tin cans, but can be used any number of times.

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What He Said.

They tell strange stories of English clergymen of the olden time. There was a certain Dr. Farmer, an Oxford don, who had a country living near the university, which he was accustomed to serve with great punctuality. He was a man of very clerical demeanor, and one day in a barber shop he was reminded of the fact in a ludicrous manner.

"Well, what news?" said the clergyman to the barber, as he took his seat in the chair.

"I saw Tom, yesterday," was the artist's reply, "and he made such a bad remark about you!"

"What was it?" asked Farmer.

"Indeed, sir, I could not tell you; it was too bad to repeat."

The clergyman insisted on knowing, and at length the barber, with a great show of reluctance, replied: "Why, sir, he said you wasn't fit to carry meat to a bear."

"And what did you say?" asked the Doctor.

"I said, sir," replied the barber, with enthusiastic loyalty, "that you was!"

The Biggest Blunders

Made by men are those which affect the relative conditions of health and disease. Among them are the resort to violent medication, the obstinate adherence to dietary rules without reference to their adaptability to the system, and worst of all disregard of small ailments. Extremists who are guilty of such follies deserve to suffer. The use of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, the abandonment of dosing, the selection of a diet consonant with the stomach, and a prompt resort to the first—these are conditions precedent to a recovery of sound digestion, the restoration of vigor, biliary activity, and a regular action of the bowels. It is a fatal delusion to suppose that minor ailments wear away of themselves. Diseases, no matter how trivial in their inception, beget others. In the early stages of fever, colds, catarrh, rheumatism, sciatica, constipation and kidney troubles, a prompt recourse to the Bitters is a wise precaution.

Its Vast Extent.

Nearly all schoolboys are familiar with the fine passage from a speech by Daniel Webster in which he alluded to the territorial extent of Great Britain's possessions. He spoke of the morning drum-beat keeping company with the hours and saluting the flag of Great Britain as the sun journeyed around the earth. Sir Richard Temple, at the scientific meeting at Montreal, read a paper on the vast extent of the English globe. One-fifth of the habitable globe is under the sway of Queen Victoria. Her subjects number 315,000,000, and Australia and Canada have room for 200,000,000 more. The annual revenue of the empire amounts to \$1,018,000,000. Local taxes swell this sum \$2,500,000,000 more, so that the entire cost of government is about \$7.50 per capita annually. These are impressive figures; but our own country is rapidly overtaking Great Britain in wealth and population. Our relative increase is much greater. In the pregnant words of Prime Minister Gladstone, "the United States is passing England at a canter."

THE MASON & HAMILIN UPRIGHT PIANOS are pronounced to be the organs of the same company, the best of their kind. The refinement and purity of tone attained in them are especially commendable.—Boston Journal.

Mules and Horses.

The question as to the status of the mule in the animal kingdom is a much-mooted one here. An ordinance was passed by the Council some months since prohibiting certain animals, among them horses, from running at large within the city limits. Mules were omitted—accidentally, it is supposed. The owner of one of these animals was arraigned before our former Mayor charged with violating the ordinance in question. He pleaded in bar of the offense that mules were not included in the ordinance. The Mayor accepted the plea and discharged him on the ground that "a mule was not a horse." Since that time the owners of these kicking quadrupeds have not been slow to take advantage of the decision, as well as of the defective ordinance. The present executive, however, has just fined one of these parties, deciding that in contemplation of the law "a mule is a horse."—Roanoke (Va.) Cor. *Lynchburg News*.

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