

## The Dangers of Belle Isle.

Shipping masters arriving at Montreal report that the Straits of Belle Isle are blocked with icebergs and it is expected that it will be well on in the season before vessels are able to pass through the channel. Owing to the great danger attending the navigation of the Straits a movement is now on foot to abandon the channel altogether and to use Cabot Strait, which separates Newfoundland from Cape Breton, as the sole ocean gateway for the maritime commerce of the Dominion.

The dangers attending navigation by the St. Lawrence route is shown by the long list of disasters at Belle Isle. The Strait is about fifty miles in length, is less than ten miles wide at its narrowest point and does not exceed sixteen at its outlet. It is notorious for its currents, which are doubly dangerous because they are so variable and cannot be charted. But the greatest danger is from fog and ice.

The fog at times is so dense that it is impossible to see more than a few yards ahead and many instances are related of big passenger steamers with hundreds of souls on board which have had hair-breadth escapes from going to the bottom in the fog. A couple of summers ago one of the largest Montreal liners was within an ace of going to pieces on the reefs of Battle Harbor in a dense fog. The vessel was twenty-one miles out of her course.

Dr Greenfield, superintendent of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Mission at Labrador relates that last summer he was passing in through the Strait in his steam launch when he sighted a large liner speeding along, heading right for a shoal which lay half a mile before her and on which she must have struck in five minutes had his warning whistle not caused the ship to alter her course. In the last few years many fine ships have gone ashore in the Straits with loss of life and valuable cargoes.

Then there is the danger from ice in the Straits and the adjacent waters. Every winter the immense Arctic floes, thickly studded with bergs, drift down along the east coast of Newfoundland and are sucked through the Straits and discharged into the waters of the St. Lawrence Gulf until the surface of that sea is thickly covered with the frozen masses. These conditions last from December until May, but even after the Gulf relieves itself of the ice by sending it out through Cabot Strait the floes continue to be embayed near Belle Isle. Owing to the thinness of her plates no iron steamer would dare to venture among the frozen masses, as contact with them would mean a puncture at the water line which might involve the sinking of the ship.

When the ocean beyond Belle Isle is seen to be covered with the bergs the St. Lawrence steamers have to go south, steam around the southern seaboard of Newfoundland and avail themselves of Cabot Strait, separating Cape Breton from Newfoundland and affording a clear path to the ocean.

As the summer advances the ice embargo is removed by the sun and wind. In some years it is possible to work through the Straits by the end of June or early in July, but in other seasons the obstruction remains considerably longer. Last year it was well into August before the passage was considered safe and the indications are that this year it will be as late. For all practical purposes the Belle Isle channel is available for only three and a half months out of the seven during which the St. Lawrence is navigable and it is attended with the greatest danger.

The route by Cabot Strait is 150 miles longer, but its safety more than compensates for the difference in time. A large sum of money has been voted by the Canadian Parliament for the improvement of the St. Lawrence route from Montreal to the sea, and the government is being urged to spend it on the Cabot Strait route which can be used during the whole season, instead of on the Belle Isle channel.

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### The First Sight of His Mother.

A minister living in an Indiana village received a call one night from a parishioner "Will you go to Indianapolis for me?" he asked. "We have decided to send Johnnie there for an operation. We have received encouragement that he may yet be made to see."

Johnnie had been born without sight, and now, a little lad of six, bright and

sunny, and hardly realizing that he lacked anything to make life happy, he was facing a future of darkness, little hope having till now been given to the parents that anything could be done for his eyes.

"Go with my wife and Johnnie," said the father. "I cannot go; I dare not go. But stay with her till it is over, and either rejoice with us or comfort us, and send me word as fast as the lightning can bring it."

The minister went and stayed with the lad while the oculist, not overconfident, began his work, and till at last, with a thrill of triumph in his tone, he said: "The boy will see!"

The glad wire tingled with the message to the father, and the minister, with the overjoyed mother, retired to wait for the time when the bandaged eyes could bear light enough for a first look at the beautiful world.

At last came the notification of the expected test. In the dimly lighted room the mother and the minister stood breathless while the doctor carefully raised the shade. The little lad, overwhelmed by a sudden possession of a new sense, cast a bewildered look from one to another of the three.

"Johnnie, said the minister, 'this is your mother."

The little arms went up and clasped her neck, the happy boy verifying his new sense by those already tested; and caressing the loving face that he saw leaning above him, he cried, "O mother! Is this really you, or is it heaven?"

It was indeed like a glimpse into heaven I felt, said the minister, as if I had witnessed something of the glad bewilderment of a newly translated soul in its first sight of the face of our Heavenly Father.

### Cramps Are Like Burglars.

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### What Ailed Mother.

Last summer a famous specialist in nervous diseases visited a little village on Cape Cod. One day a tall, awkward young man called on him. He had a warty face which bore signs of dissipation; he wore cheap clothes cut in the latest fashion; there were rings on his fingers, and a gold chain swung ostentatiously over a gay waistcoat. He came to consult the doctor about his mother, who had some obscure ailment, as he feared, mortal ailment. He spoke with much feeling, but did not forget to adjust his chain, and to twirl his mustache as he talked.

"She has been a very active woman," he said. "Had tremendous energy all of her life, but now she seems to have gone all to pieces. She has no pain, no disease; but she can't eat nor sleep much, and she is so weak she can hardly walk. She cries if you look at her. What is the matter? Can you help her?"

"What work did she do?" asked the doctor.

"She was a tailoress, and she worked harder than was necessary," said the young man, reluctantly. "She used to sew until two or three o'clock in the morning."

"What is your trade—your business?" demanded the doctor.

"Well—I—I'm not in business at present. It's pretty difficult to make a start, you know. I've considered several different occupations, but I have not found anything suited to my peculiar bent as yet. But I came to consult you about mother. What do you think is the matter with her?"

"You!" said the doctor. "Nothing else. She has sapped her life for you; and now, when you should be supporting her and bringing comfort and honor to her old age, you are a dead weight and a disgrace. If she dies, you and you only are to blame."

When he was gone, the doctor said, "It is a common enough case. A woman is unselfish and energetic. She gives her life to serve a husband or a son. Her devotion only encourages them in idleness and selfishness. At middle age her vitality is exhausted. Her nerves give way under the long strain, and tonics are of no more use than putting wood on a fire that has gone out."

Poor, unhappy husband or son whose eyes open too late to the fact that "mother" is sinking under some mysterious disease, and who must hear from the doctor the frank verdict, "It is you, and nothing else!"

### Not a Hero.

My first experience with bears is worth recording. I was in the Valley of the Great Sport on the Pacific Coast. He was walking down a path leading his horse and looking for deer. Suddenly the horse

snorted, and four silver-tips stood directly in his path! At the same moment the horse tore the bridle from his rider's hand and galloped back to camp.

Meantime the bears had not stirred, although the biggest of them was staring disdainfully straight into my eyes. I was idiot enough to drop on one knee, and fire pointblank into that gray, grim face.

The unearthly roar that followed shook the firmament. I can swear that I was cool till I pulled the trigger; but that hideous bellow, running the gamut of sound between rage and surprise, and culminating in a shrill scream of agony, undid me. The six seemed to be full of bears.

In a jiffy I was up a tree, rifle in hand. It is my honest conviction that I pulled myself up to the first branch with one hand a feat that I have attempted many a time upon a horizontal bar, and never accomplished. Perched aloft, my wits returned.

### CAPTAIN KIDD IN NEW YORK.

The Notorious Pirate Once Lived in Wall Street.

With the growth of interest in the decorating of historic sites in New York with memorial tablets, it may not be far distant when some society will place a modest little bronze plate on the building at 56 Wall street, recalling the fact that Captain Kidd, the pirate bold, lived there for several years over two centuries ago.

The exact date of the notorious seaman's arrival in this city is not material, but it was previous to 1691, for he had been here long enough to woo and win a wealthy widow and be accepted as her third husband. In the old marriage licenses of New York appears the following under date of May 16, 1691:

"A license of marriage granted unto Captain William Kidd of New York, G. n., of the one part, and Sarah Oort, the widow of John Oort, late of New York merchant, deceased."

Kidd's wife owned the house at 56 Wall street, which had been left to her by her first husband, William Cox, a prosperous merchant, who owned considerable property in the lower part of the city. He was drowned in Staten Island bay in August, 1689, and between that date and May, 1691, his widow had married and lost her second husband. It may be interesting here to state that, undaunted by the decease of so many husbands, Mrs. Kidd, after the execution on the gibbet in England of the pirate husband in 1701, married for the fourth time. This was on November 4, 1703, and the husband of her final matrimonial venture was Christopher Rousby.

A further indication of the esteem in which Kidd was held by his friends and relatives during his days of peace in New York is given in the will of Samuel Bradley, a brother of the captain's wife. Before going on a long ocean voyage Bradley, who was a young man, made his will on July 5, 1693, appointing Kidd his sole executor. A portion of this interesting document, which is said to be the only one extant saying a good word for Captain Kidd, is: "Whereas, my loving brother-in-law, Captain William Kidd, hath been very careful of me and hath likewise for my encouragement, now in my minority, at my desire and request, advanced and paid unto me the sum of £140, current money of New York, which I now employ in trade and merchandise. For and in consideration of his so great love to me I do give and bequeath unto my said brother-in-law, Captain Kidd, one-half a certain lot of ground known as lot No. 6 in the street commonly called Dock street and one half of the dwelling house in Wall street and my lot of ground in the new street without a gate of the said city, called King street."

Captain Kidd never enjoyed possession of these generous gifts. Before coming to New York he had acquired considerable fame as a brave seaman and had several successful encounters with the French. Pirates inhaled the seas, and the English government decided to make war upon them and drive them from some of their most frequented localities. A ship of 287 tons and carrying thirty guns was accordingly fitted out, and the command given to Captain Kidd, who sailed from Plymouth harbor, England, in 1696, on his mission against the pirates.

The story of how, yielding to the temptation to turn pirate himself, he soon became the most famous and fiercest of those ocean robbers, is well known. He was never in New York city again, although he buried a quantity of treasure on Gardiner's Island, much of which was afterward recovered and he is supposed to have

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landed at or near Oyster bay and buried another quantity of treasure. He was finally arrested in Boston in 1699, taken to England, where he was tried for the crimes of piracy and murder, and sentenced to be hanged, which sentence was carried out on May 12, 1701.

As they reached the corner he turned and whistled and then called "Here, Collier Button!" As the puny little fellow came scurrying up his companion said, "Why on earth do you call your dog that?" "Why?" replied the proud but worried owner, "just because he gets lost so easily."

It was in a Beacon Hill parlor. He said: "I have long searched for the true, the beautiful, the good, the—"; and she interrupted: "I comprehend, dear Cecil, what you would convey. My reply is in the affirmative."

"I didn't know Bragg was a publisher," "A publisher? Who told you he was?" "He did. He said he was a disseminator of light literature."

"I've noticed," said the observant girl, that the big men are the most demonstrative in their love making. Perhaps, remarked the wise girl; but, after all, a girl should never judge a lover by his sighs.



He ran a mile,

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