

THE HEADLIGHT

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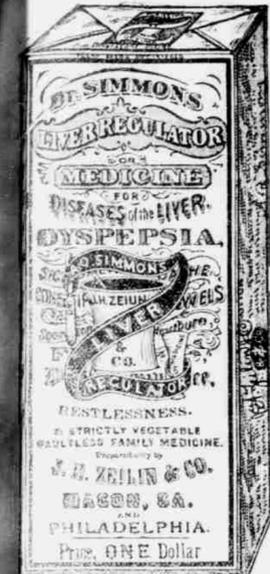
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HUMAN NATURE.
If life were not so sad a thing,
Who then could think of being merry!
If God's will would bear altering,
His plans we should not try to vary!—
Were we once free from pain and care,
We straight would seek some cross to bear!
If upon love a seal were set,
How many seals would then be broken!
If gentle speech were hard to get,
How many kind words would be spoken!—
If heaven were once denied us all,
How we should then to heaven call!
—Mary A. Mason, in Youth's Companion.

A FEMALE CRUSOE.

On the 26th day of October, A. D. 1871, the trading schooner Little King sailed out of the port of Singapore, bound for the Kinderon Islands, to the north, and only one of her crew was ever again met with. For five years before the schooner had belonged to and been commanded by Captain Ezra Williams, an American from San Francisco. He traded between Singapore and Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the smaller islands of the Java Sea, and in May, 1871, died at Singapore of fever. He had then been married for three years to an English woman, whose maiden name was Danforth, who had been a domestic in an English family in Singapore. She had accompanied him in all his voyages, and had secured much experience and information. As she could not readily dispose of the schooner, she determined to continue in the business, acting as her own supercargo.

Mrs. Williams secured an Englishman named Parker as captain, another named Hope as mate, and with three Malays before the mast and a Chinese cook, and with about \$7000 in specie in the cabin, she sailed away on her first voyage, and it was four years later before she was again heard of. The purpose of this narrative is to chronicle her adventures in the interim, as I had it from her own lips.

While it was a bit queer to start on a voyage with a woman virtually in command of the craft, Mrs. Williams had nothing to fear from her crew. The officers were good navigators, and the men willing, and all were anxious for a profitable voyage. She had no complaints to make until the islands had been reached. The group lies between the Malay Peninsula and the island of Borneo, about 100 miles off the coast of the former, and from 250 to 300 miles from Borneo. There are nineteen islands in the group, covering a length of 120 miles by about forty broad. There are only seven or eight which are inhabited, and at the time of which I write the people were a lawless set, and a share of them out-and-pirates. The products were dried fish, sea shells, coconuts, dye stuffs, various herbs and roots for medicinal purposes, and several sorts of spices. The schooner had been there once before and made a profitable trip of it. She had clothing, powder, shoes, axes, and a great variety of notions, and where none of these were wanted she paid cash.

On the trip the schooner worked to the northward and made her stop at the Island of Quewang, being the third one from the northernmost island of the group. She met with a cordial reception, and at once began bartering for and receiving cargo. She was anchored in a sheltered bay, within 500 feet of the beach, and had been there five days before anything occurred to arouse Mrs. Williams's suspicions that all was not right. She then observed that the entire crew were drinking deeply of a native liquor which the natives were supplying in a liberal manner, and that some of the fellows were becoming impudently familiar. When the Captain was spoken to he laughed at her idea of trouble and promised better things, but the drinking continued. On the afternoon of the seventh day several women came off in the canoes. One of them, who could speak English pretty fairly, was presented with some ornaments by Mrs. Williams, and in return she hinted to her that it was the intention of the natives to capture and loot the schooner that night. They had discovered that there was a large sum of money on board, and they had found the crew as easy one to handle. The native woman hadn't time nor opportunity to say much, but no sooner had the crowd of natives left the schooner at dusk, as was their custom, than Mrs. Williams set out to sound the alarm. Imagine her feelings when she discovered that every single man on board, from Captain to cook, was so much under the influence of liquor as to be unable to comprehend her words. She

doused them with sea water and pounded them with belaying pins, but all to no purpose. The entire lot were stupidly drunk, just as the natives had planned for.

It was a perilous situation for the woman to be placed in. If the natives captured the schooner they would murder every one of the crew as a natural sequence, and the first step toward capturing her had already been taken. The step she took showed sound judgment. The schooner's yawl was down, having been in almost hourly use. The native village was about forty rods back from the beach, and as the schooner swung to the ebb tide she presented her broadside to the village. When the yawl was pulled around to the port side she was out of sight. Mrs. Williams's first act was to step the mast; her next to supply the craft with provisions and water. There were an unusual number of lights burning in the village, showing that something was on foot, but she had no fear of an attack until a later hour. The natives would wait until certain that all the people were helpless.

Mrs. Williams had determined to slip away from the doomed craft in the yawl, although she had no experience in the management of a small boat. After water and provisions she brought up all her money, which was in boxes she could handle. Not a penny of it was left behind. There was a rifle, revolver and double-barreled shotgun belonging to her husband. These she took, together with powder, shot and fixed ammunition. Then she gathered up all her bedding and clothing, took three or four spare blankets, two suits of clothes belonging to the officers, and when these were in the boat she took pots, pans, dishes and cutlery, bundled up a lot of carpenter's tools, secured two axes, a lot of small rope, several pieces of canvas, and, in brief, loaded the yawl with whatever was portable and handy, including the clock, compass, quadrant, sextant and a lamp and four gallons of oil. She worked for upward of two hours getting these things into the boat, and the last articles taken aboard were meat, flour, beans, tea and other provisions from the lazarette.

It was about ten o'clock when Mrs. Williams took her seat in the yawl and cast off from the schooner, and the tide at once drifted her out of the bay and to the north. The only thing of consequence she had forgotten was a chart of the Java Sea, which she could have put her hand on at a minute's notice, and it was the want of this which made a Crusoe of her for several years. As the yawl went to sea after its own fashion, Mrs. Williams lost the points of the compass at once. Indeed, had she kept them in mind, it would have been of no benefit just then, as she had not studied the chart and could not have told which way to steer to reach another group or the main land. She heard nothing whatever from the natives, but several years later it was ascertained that they did not board the schooner until midnight. The men, all of whom were still drunk and asleep, were stripped and tossed overboard to drown, and then the absence of the woman and her money was discovered. Five or six native crafts were at once sent in pursuit, while the people who remained looted the schooner of everything of value to them, and then towed her out to deep water and scuttled her to hide the evidences of their crime.

After drifting three or four miles out to sea the yawl got a light breeze, and after a few trials the woman learned how to manage the sail and lay a course. She had no idea which way she was heading, but ran off before the breeze, and kept going all night and until mid-afternoon next day. She must have passed the island of Upnong in the early morning, but so far to the westward that she could not see it. The wind hauling at midforenoon altered her course by several points, and the northernmost island of the group named Poillo was thus brought in line. The island is seven miles long by three in width at its widest part, and well wooded and watered. The woman landed on the east side, at the mouth of a creek which forms a snug little harbor. She was convinced that this was one of the islands of the Kinderon group, but she did not know that it was the most northerly one. By consulting the compass she got the cardinal points, but not having studied the chart she could not say in what direction any other land lay. She had seen the sails of two traders that

morning, but as they were native crafts she had every wish to avoid them. The boats which were sent in pursuit of her must have taken another course, as she saw nothing of them.

When Mrs. Williams landed on the island she had no idea of stopping there for more than a day or two, or until she could decide on some plan. She had scarcely gone ashore when a gale came up which lasted about thirty hours, during which the yawl was so damaged that she must undergo repairs. She unloaded her goods on the shore, covered them from the weather, and then set out to explore the island, pretty well satisfied that it was inhabited, and hoping, if it was, that her money might secure assistance. Before night she was satisfied that she was all alone, and she made a shelter out of the blankets, and slept the night away as peacefully as if in her cabin on the schooner. Next day she exchanged her apparel for a man's suit and began the erection of a hut. In a grove about 200 feet from the beach she erected a shelter, 10x20 feet, which withstood the storms of almost four years. While the sides consisted of canvas and poles, the roof was thatched with a long grass which she found on the island in abundance.

It took the woman about a week to construct her hut and move her stores into it, and this had scarcely been done when her boat, owing to carelessness on her part, was carried off by the sea, and she now realized that she was a prisoner until such time as the crew of some trading vessel might land and discover her. After her house was completed she made a more thorough exploration of her island home. There were parrots and other birds, snakes of a harmless variety, Borneo rats, and a drove of about 300 Java pigs, which are about the size of the American peccary, but are wild instead of fierce.

The woman had clothing to last her five or six years, but the provisions she had brought from the schooner would not supply her needs more than a few months. While hoping and expecting to be taken off almost any day, she wisely prepared for a long stay. She had fish-hooks and lines in her outfit, and with fish from the sea, meat from the woods, and bananas and wild fruits from the groves, she had a variety and a plenty. Six months after she landed a native craft put in about a mile from her hut, but creeping through the woods she saw that all were Malays, and so savage in appearance that she did not dare make herself known. Seven months later a second craft sent men ashore to fill two water casks, but she was also afraid of these. She lived very quietly from that time until nearly two years after her

landing, having remarkably good health all the time, but naturally lonely and cast down at times.

One afternoon, as she was in the forest about half a mile from home, having her shotgun with her, a Borneo sailor suddenly confronted her. He was entirely alone, and whether he had been marooned or cast away she never learned. As she was dressed in a man's suit he naturally took her for a man, but his first movement was a hostile one. He advanced upon the woman with a club in his hand and uttering shouts of menace, and to save her own life she was compelled to shoot him.

Now and then, all through her stay, trading vessels were sighted in the offing, with now and then a craft known to be manned by Englishmen, but signals made to the latter by means of smoke were never heeded. Her main hope was that the loss of the schooner would in some way reach her friends at Singapore, and that a searching party might be sent out to her rescue.

One day, when she had been on the island four years lacking about fifty days, the British survey ship, Sahib, then engaged in surveying the group, dropped anchor off the mouth of the creek and sent a party ashore to explore the interior. I had the honor not to only head this party, but to be the first man to see and to speak to Mrs. Williams. We found her in excellent health, although tanned and roughened by exposure to the weather. When she had donned her own proper apparel and had time to tidy up no one could find fault with her appearance.

After a few days we sailed for Singapore, where Mrs. Williams was safely landed, and a few weeks later a man-of-war was despatched to the island where the schooner had been seized. Natives were found who gave all the particulars,

and the result was that eight men were brought aboard, tried, convicted and swung up at the yard arm, while three more were shot while trying to escape from the island.—New York Sun.

What an English Lady Visitor Thinks of Us.

There are several customs and habits in American homes which at first strike an English visitor as rather comical. First and foremost is the ever present "rocker" like the poor—ye have it always with you; one does not think it so much out of place for the ladies to be constantly swaying to and fro, but there seems something funny in watching a shrewd, hard-headed business man rocking back and forth as he takes his relaxation in the family circle. What is the reason for such perpetual motion? Is the average American temperament too nervous and excitable to enjoy calm serene repose? In my mind's eye I picture to myself the supreme disgust of a dignified British merchant were he to find himself expected to play the part of a nodding Chinese mandarin figure.

Then the meal tables, what a formidable array of individual dishes and saucers; a plentiful dinner necessitates continuous peregrinations among them all, which, to anybody fresh from the simple one, or at most, two plate English table, is a little confusing; of course the greater variety of vegetables and fruits renders it necessary in a measure, but it is sometimes a little overdone.

I feel sure that the alternate cooling and heating of the stomach by the amount of iced water and hot breads consumed is the cause of the prevalent dyspepsia; iced water is set before you everywhere as a matter of course, to say nothing of the fountains in the cars and stores—a contrast from the English and Continental hotels, where the waiters eye you with amazement if you ask for a glass of water; you have to ask for it specially, as an American gentleman found to his surprise on visiting Paris during the exhibition rush last year, when in response to his request the waiter replied with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders: "But, Monsieur, water is to wash in!" Then again a piece of moderately stale bread is not to be had anywhere; it is always freshly baked in one form or another. The meals are eaten hurriedly, and altogether the poor digestive organs have a hard time. It

In shopping in New York one misses the respect and deference of the average London shop-walkers and assistants. Here the "sales-lady" hands your parcel and change with a jerk as if glad to be rid of the bother of selling you anything, frequently, too, with her head turned away from you altogether as she gossips with her neighbor. "Equality" is a fine thing, but a little more respect mixed with it as occasion requires would be an improvement, and surely a customer anywhere is entitled to a certain amount of courtesy. The great difference in the aspect of American and English villages is caused by the houses. There are absolutely no frame houses in England, and the brick or stone buildings have no verandahs.

The modern frame houses are certainly picturesque with their gay tinted paint, and how charming on a sultry summer afternoon to sit in a shady corner of the piazza, with book or needle-work, or discuss the latest scandal with your dearest friend, not forgetting the moonlight evenings when the same spot is relegated to the young people and the old, old story is retold with variations or the backward swain is finally brought to the point. "I fear me these same stoops have much to answer for." The level railroad crossings mar the beauty of the villages, and what is worse, they are exceedingly inconvenient and dangerous; the cars are excellent, but the tracks are bad. Look to it, then, that you remove the reproach from your country, for at present Old England can show you something worth imitating in the way of good, firm, substantial railroad tracks.

I cannot conclude my disjointed remarks without paying a tribute to the generous, free, warmhearted hospitality dispensed on all sides by American residents to English visitors. After experiencing it, I have some misgivings lest our colder, more reserved manners impress Americans in England unfavorably. Let me assure you, however, that we mean just as well, but do not possess such a happy knack of making you think so just at first. At heart we are delighted to have you with us.—Long Island Rustler.

The Buddhists of Japan propose to establish a bank in order to obtain funds for the propagation of their religion.

A Worm-Lit Sea.

During the whole of the past year, as well as the last five months of 1889, the whole of the sea of Venice has been as one vast expanse of phosphorescent waves whenever lashed to even the slightest extent by the winds. Formerly this luminous appearance had been noticed only at intervals of about ten or fifteen years, then only from the beginning of summer until about the end of harvest, and in places abounding with sea grass.

Now everything seems changed, the whole surface of the sea or gulf appearing as a sea of pale white fire as soon as darkness sets in on a windy night. In calm nooks, the mere drawing of a stick or cane back and forth through the water is sufficient to give the effect of an electric flash, the light dying out and again returning with the ebullitions of the water. A flask filled with water emits no light until shaken violently; the introduction of a lead pencil or small stick, however, will cause the fluid to glow with greater intensity than any amount of shaking on the part of the experimenter.

Strained through a flue cloth, the water loses all of its peculiar properties, they having been imparted to the cloth, which now flickers and glows all over the entire surface like the spot where a damp match has been scratched in the dark. After the last mentioned peculiarity was noticed, scientists made examinations of cloths used in such operations and were rewarded for their pains by the discovery of the light giving midge, a minute worm or maggot, scarcely the one-seventh-hundredth of an inch in length, each bow-shaped and very lively.

Each of these little creatures is provided with twenty-two mammilla instead of feet, eleven on each side, and had eleven luminous rings around his tiny body. Persons living on the shores of the gulf say that when the waters sparkle more than usual it is a sure sign of a storm.—New York Journal.

Story of the Empress Frederick.

The Prince of Wales is not the only one of his mother's children who knows how to assert himself. The Empress Frederick is ordinarily the most affable and unaffected of royalties, yet nobody understands better how to give dignified rebuke when occasion requires it. Some ten years ago, when, as Crown Princess, she was spending the winter at Peli, on the Riviera, with her three daughters, they were in the habit of making excursions almost daily, traveling by train and taking their places among the other passengers in any carriages where they found places.

On one of these occasions a Frenchman who happened to find himself in the same compartment with them, being ignorant—or affecting ignorance—of the rank of his fellow travelers, was proceeding to light a cigar in accordance with the universal custom on that line, but before doing so he turned to the Princess and politely inquired: "Does madam object to the smell of smoke?"

"I do not know the smell, sir. Nobody has ever presumed to smoke in my presence," was the crushing reply.

It will probably surprise many persons, thinks the Chicago Herald, to learn that Harvard University has no evening reading-room or library facilities whatever for its students.



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