

IN A LIFEBOAT ROUND THE WORLD A Great Adventure and Why

NON-STOP VOYAGE OF 7500 MILES

Four men are sailing from London on an adventurous voyage round the world, setting out in an old lifeboat called the Elizabeth and Blanche. They expect to be away nearly three years and to cover over 38,000 miles of sea.

It is a risky undertaking for a craft only 40 feet long and much smaller than the ship in which Columbus sailed to America. But the boat has had its seaworthiness well tested, for it was stationed on the wild Cornish coast, at Mounts Bay, for twenty-two years, and saved over ninety persons from wrecks.

To Secure Safety at Sea

The crew, who are under Captain G. E. Hitchens, will risk their lives, and dare hunger and thirst, to obtain information of the greatest use to people cast away in boats far from land.

For one thing, they want to show that if boats of the type of the Elizabeth and Blanche were carried by all large steamers such boats could transport passengers and crew safely and quickly to port in the event of their ship sinking.

They also want to ascertain, by trying a large variety of foods, which kinds are the most sustaining for shipwrecked folk. Boats full of people also need a lot of fresh water, so experiments are going to be made with an apparatus which Captain Hitchens has invented for the purpose of catching large quantities of rain.

Longest Open-Sea Passage

Leaving the Thames and steering down the Channel, the boat will first make for Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands. Then, calling at Ascension and St. Helena on the way, she will go round the Cape of Good Hope to Durban. A long journey of 4500 miles across the Indian Ocean is then in front of her before she arrives at Australia. The Elizabeth and Blanche will put into many of the ports of that continent before proceeding to New Zealand.

From Auckland the longest non-stop run of the voyage will begin. This will be across 7500 miles of lonely ocean to the Strait of Magellan, by far the longest open-sea passage ever attempted by a boat of this size.

Passing through this bleak strait, the voyagers will turn north, sailing along the South American coast to the West Indies. The United States and Canada will next be visited, the boat finally crossing the Atlantic to harbour at Penzance.

Besides Captain Hitchens there will be on board Mr. P. Nichols, the mate; Mr. L. Stewart, the engineer; and Mr. G. Moss, the wireless operator.

THE WAR AND THE NUT America Copies a German Idea

The necessity of the war drove the German chemists to seek a way of extracting oil from the kernels of stone fruit, such as cherries, plums, and apricots. The proposal was taken up with enthusiasm, and a collection of fruit stones was organised.

Now the Americans have copied the idea on a large scale, particularly in California, and today there are half a dozen huge plants where fruit stones are treated on a commercial basis and everything useful they contain is extracted from them.

The shells are crushed and the fragments are steeped in a solution of sea salt, in which the broken shells rise to the top and the kernels sink to the bottom. After washing, the kernels are taken to the press which extracts their oil, while the broken shells are converted into charcoal.

HELPING ONE ANOTHER

A Young Man Catches His Bus

A C.N. reader who saw this little incident from the top of a bus sends this note.

A blind man stood on the refuge at the Elephant and Castle, tapping his stick against the kerb.

He wanted to cross the road, but no one seemed to hear the pathetic tap-tap of his stick, and after a while he called out: "Take me over the road, please." The traffic hid the refuge and the people on the pavement could not see him.

Then a jolly young man came bustling along; he could see the bus he wanted, and was hurrying along to board it before the policeman sent the traffic on. He raced past the blind man and nearly pushed him over, but, turning to apologise, he saw and understood. Forgetting his bus, he took the blind man's arm with a cheery "Sorry, old chap; where do you want to get to?" and led him across the road.

Then the traffic moved on, and, craning my neck over the top of the bus, I saw the kind-hearted young man racing after his bus, which he caught with the help of the conductor's outstretched arm.

It was only a little thing, but in a world of bustle and unrest do not little things shine out like rays of sunshine?

THE POOR PROFESSOR A Tragedy of Learning in Paris

We can admire the thrift of the French peasant in certain circumstances, without applauding some of its consequences.

As we have lately seen, the problem of collecting taxes in France is not as simple as in England, and now we hear a fresh piece of news that does not impress us favourably with the thrifty citizens of Paris.

A Commission appointed to consider the salaries of professors attached to the École des Chartes has reported in favour of making things easier for these scholarly and industrious men, who teach in one of the highest-graded schools in the French capital. The École des Chartes is attached to the famous Sorbonne University, and one would have thought its teachers would be paid at least a living wage. Yet it appears that they get only the equivalent of £2 10s. a week, the wage of a girl typist in London.

How can learning flourish when it is so ill-rewarded?

WHO LIKES EVERYBODY? I, Says a Lady of Wells

We are generally prejudiced against one or two people, however much we try not to be; but a C.N. reader talking the other day with a lady who has a jolly shop at Wells was delighted to find that she liked everybody!

"The work is too much for me to do alone," she said, "and I'm thinking of getting someone else to help, for if I had my own way I should just go on painting, painting, painting! It won't matter who comes to help, so long as she knows her job, because I like everybody; and, for another thing, I never lose my temper! What I am afraid of, however, is that she might lose her temper with me!"

This lady plays the violin, has written a play, and does the most exquisite illuminations; her room is full of the lovely things that hands can make, pottery, pictures, beautiful hand-woven material, and jewellery; but what I remember most are those words of hers, "I like everybody," and "I never lose my temper!"

PAUL POTTER AND HIS PICTURES

On the twentieth of this month, three hundred years ago, there was born at Enkhuizen, in Holland, an artist whom Europe has been proud to remember. His name was Paul Potter. He had a short life filled with a strong purpose and a definite ambition. It would seem, from the way he worked, that he knew he would never reach middle age.

Paul was more fortunate than many painters who become great, in that from the very first he was able to work at the art he loved. His father was a landscape painter who never achieved anything remarkable, but was able to teach his boy to draw and paint. Nicolas Moeyart of Amsterdam also helped to train Paul. But even at the age when most lads are playing marbles and shirking work, Paul had learned that for him there was only one teacher, a hard teacher, Nature. The result of this intent labour was that when he was fifteen Holland was aware of him and talked of his work.

A Famous Study

Paul was really an animal painter. Every subject he chose was an excuse for drawing animals. When he was seventeen he painted a picture of Abraham going into Canaan, which is now in a Nuremberg gallery, but it is easy to see that all Paul cared about was Abraham's flocks and herds.

He attempted some huge pictures which were not very happy, and soon settled down to the work of his especial genius—small, simple, and direct pictures of animals in landscape. One huge canvas has survived of the period when Paul wanted to paint pictures the size of a house—the famous study called the Young Bull, which is almost life size. This picture is in The Hague Gallery, and much thought of, but it is by no means Potter's best work.

Simplicity and Truth

A great many people have painted animals with a landscape background. Paul Potter stands out among them as one who painted with a simplicity and truthfulness that has scarcely since been equalled. As an artist he ranks very high; as a Nature student he is acknowledged to be a great genius.

He knew nothing of moods. He brought nothing of his own temperament and expression to his work. He studied Nature in a detached way, faithfully drawing exactly what was before him, nothing more and nothing less. The result was that, where many animal painters would make an excellent picture of a certain group of sheep or cows, which might be sheep or cows anywhere, Paul Potter painted them in such a way that they were living portraits.

In the National Gallery

The story of his life is simple—a few years here, a few years there, in The Hague, in Amsterdam, a marriage with the daughter of an architect when he was twenty, a change of patrons now and again. But none of this was really his life, so to speak. Life was work for Paul Potter—work, Nature, a few animals, a number of small canvases and etching plates. He toiled through ill-health and the dawning knowledge that his years must be few, and he succeeded in achieving a great mass of work before he died in 1654.

His pictures are to be seen in most of the galleries of Europe. They became very precious to connoisseurs in the last century. The Dairy Farm was sold in 1890 for £6090. We have two pictures by Paul Potter in the National Gallery, and there are several in private collections. In the great array of pictures in any gallery, executed in varying moods, his work stands out like a beautiful tale told in a few simple words.

AN EASY WAY OF MAKING ELECTRICITY A New Chance for Coal THE BEST USE OF IT

Among the many schemes for using our coal to the best advantage is one devised by Dr. Wall of Sheffield University, who hopes to turn coal directly into electricity.

His invention is based on the old idea of what is called the thermo-electric "couple." Strips of any two different metals, if fastened together at one end, will produce an electric current if the joint is heated. Bismuth and antimony are specially good in this respect, so much so that neat couples of these metals are actually used to measure temperatures. The current they produce is very small, so that a large number are usually placed together, and the instrument is called a thermopile.

Large thermopiles have been made for years for producing just enough electricity to charge a small storage battery; they are heated by a number of gas flames, and in this way the heat of the gas is turned directly into current.

Hundreds of such thermo-couples could be packed together and heated by a coal fire so as to generate electricity without the use of steam-engines and dynamos. If Dr. Wall's invention (in which he uses a new alloy) can be made a success it will be of the greatest value at a time when oil fuel is fighting for supremacy with coal.

WHO IS FORGETTING HIS DOG?

What to Remember Now

Far too many dogs are now whining and barking at the end of short, heavy chains, crying for the liberty without which happiness is impossible.

Every dog needs more exercise in cold weather; it makes him healthier and brings joy into his life. If he lives outside, his kennel should be sheltered from wind and rain. He likes a dry, cosy bed better than a muddy, rain-sodden cask. If he can be in the house at night, he will not keep the neighbours awake by voicing his grievance against his chain-loving owner, and he will be a better burglar-alarm.

A light lunch and a warm, substantial supper every day, or a good lunch and a light supper, are necessities. Extra meat should be given in winter.

Dogs are very much like human beings in their primary needs; they require liberal food, comfortable housing, and freedom to play or work.

DO WE LOVE BOOKS? Or Are We Literary Humbugs?

A member of a great firm of publishers, who is very much concerned about the condition of literature, has been quoting the experience of Sir Edmund Gosse, the famous scholar and author, who declared the other day that the claim of English people to be lovers of books is largely humbug.

The publisher maintains that what Sir Edmund Gosse says is true, and he adds a further indictment. "Taken as a whole," he says, "the British people are profoundly indifferent to literature, to painting, and to music. Apart from the very small section of the population to whom art in some form or other is a great part of life, the nation does not set things of the mind on an equality with sport or making money or even with cross word puzzles."

Is he right? If he is, it is nothing to smile about. Yet another publisher told a friend of the C.N. that more poetry is being read in England today than at any time in our history.