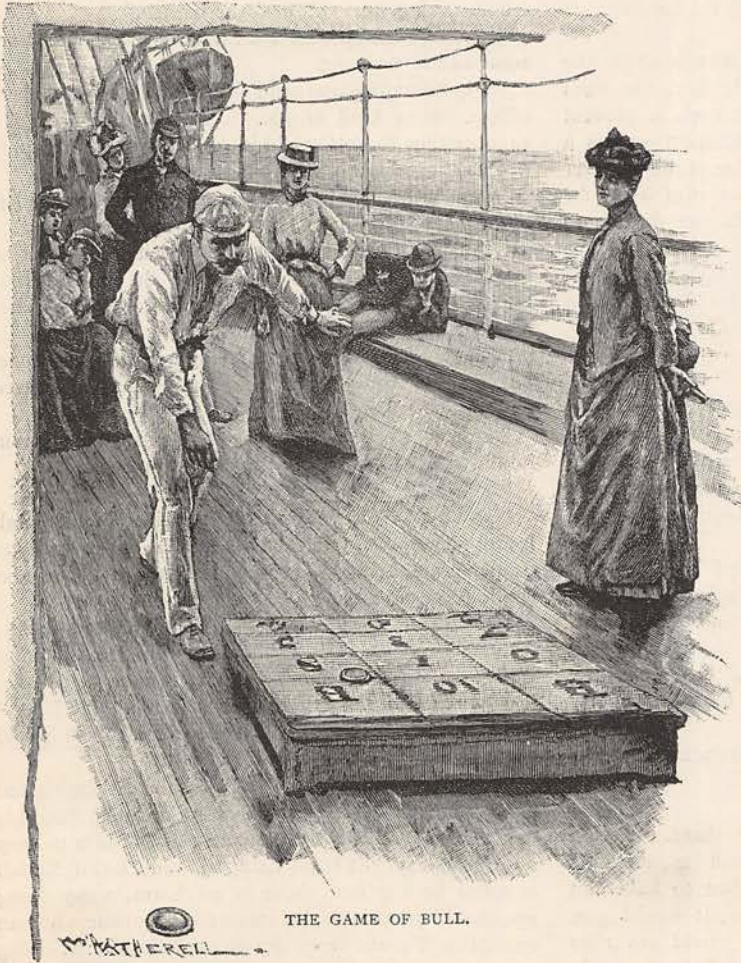


HOW WE AMUSED OURSELVES DURING A LONG VOYAGE.



THE GAME OF BULL.

IT is no small trouble to decide as to the line of steamers to which you will commit yourself in a voyage to the Antipodes. You collect rates of passage. You find out friends who have knowledge of steamers. You inquire as to whether it is better to go by the Canal or round by the Cape. You hear stories of the heat of the Red Sea, when poor passengers lounge "in their boxes," when stokers are tumbled overboard, having died from the heat, when even the ship has to turn round and go in an opposite direction to that she wishes to pursue, in order to get a breath of fresh air. You compare rates. You find you can go first-class by some steamers for less than £40, and that by others you must pay from fifty guineas to seventy. You look at the difference in the aggregate when you require six or seven tickets. You walk down Leadenhall Street or Fenchurch Avenue in considerable perplexity, which is continued until something great or small inclines to one line or the other. Perhaps your perplexity is increased by the offers of agents to procure your tickets. One will suggest one line, another will "be prepared to recom-

mend another." They don't care which you take provided they secure the five per cent. which is paid by the company to themselves, on the issue of the ticket. These agents see in the papers that you are intending to go abroad, and write in shoals, requesting the honour of "securing for you good berths by any line." Some you are obliged to reply to because they write, having some knowledge of yourself; others you can leave unanswered, and consign their communications to the waste-paper basket.

Then don't you wish there were no such thing as luggage? Shall you sell your furniture, or rather give it away at auction, or shall you take it? More worries as to cost of transit. When you have resolved to send your household goods by sailing vessel, and risk the amount of duty you will have to pay in a country where protection obtains, you have still a number of packages you must take with you. The "Orient" considerably allows a ton to each passenger, but this is a ton measurement, and not twenty hundredweight. Now, forty feet measurement is soon filled, and when you get on

board you find that in the purser's office is a list in which your excess luggage is tabulated at a rate that may even seem to you excessive.

But before that luggage reached the steamer you had no end of anxiety in securing cases of right size to go under your berth, to pack them, to get labels for those to be put in your cabin and



CONSIGNED TO THE WASTE-PAPER BASKET.

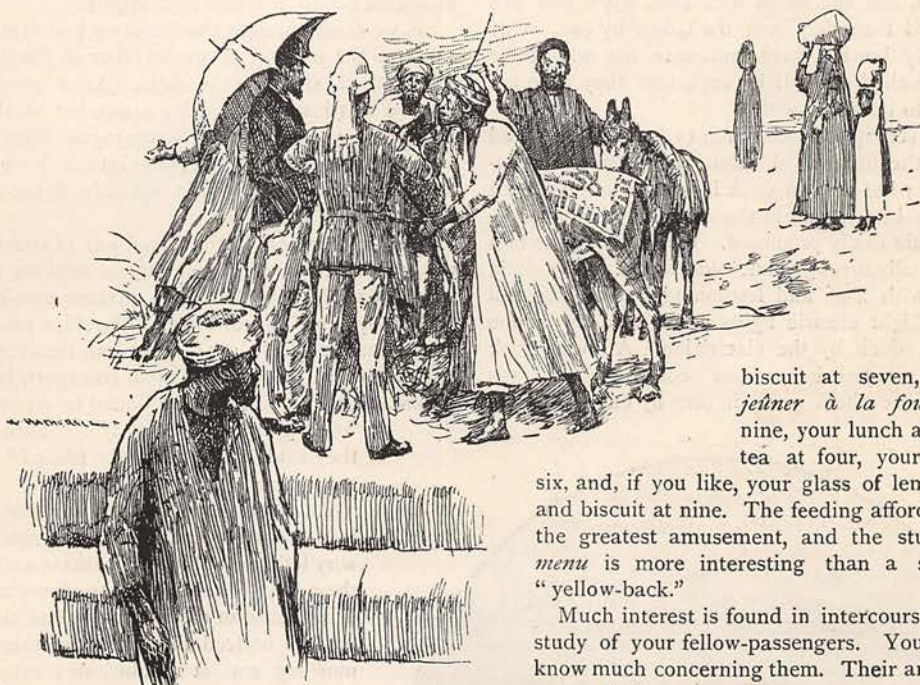
those to be put in the hold, labelled "Not wanted for the voyage."

What a muddle you get in at Fenchurch Station as you start for Tilbury! In despair you leap into the compartment, and hope your luggage will find its way somehow to the ship. Alas! if some special package that contains some articles you inevitably require in your long voyage is missing.

Apart from the attacks of *mal-de-mer*, one has very little to endure as a first-class passenger. Those who go second or third say that they have some things to put up with which are very painful. When one thinks of the narrow space in which for six weeks

ing one of such grand civic edifices as the Town Hall at Bruges or Brussels. At Gibraltar you may be overwhelmed at the sight of the gigantic rock, honey-combed with numerous galleries, and hiding many a gun. You can go over the frontier, and be struck with the quaintness and filthiness of the Spanish town. At Naples for further interest there is St. Elmo, the Palace, the Museum, Vesuvius, and Pompeii. Then at Port Said, at Suez, at Aden, at Colombo, at Albany, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney you find constantly something new to break the monotony of the voyage.

Every day also on board is helped along by the inevitable meals. You have your cup of tea and



DONKEY-MEN AT SUEZ.

biscuit at seven, your *dé-jéuner à la fourchette* at nine, your lunch at one, your tea at four, your dinner at six, and, if you like, your glass of lemon-squash and biscuit at nine. The feeding affords to many the greatest amusement, and the study of the *menu* is more interesting than a sensational "yellow-back."

Much interest is found in intercourse with and study of your fellow-passengers. You very soon know much concerning them. Their antecedents, tastes, habits, aims, prospects are gradually unfolded, apart from any inquisitiveness on your part, for many seem to delight in speaking of themselves even to a stranger.

ten or twelve hundred people are packed, it is remarkable that so little inconvenience is suffered and so few worries started.

Passengers to the East or to Australia need not be greatly troubled with *ennui*. On a voyage to the East they have the ship's library to which they can resort. If they have not brought a supply of books with them—cheap "yellow-backs" or more pretentious volumes—they will find often a good supply of standard fiction on board. There is amusement to those not afflicted with *mal-de-mer* in watching the waves or seeing the sea-birds skim along in the wake of the vessel, or they can with well-adjusted glasses decipher the names of passing vessels. There is interest also in stopping at various places on the route. At Plymouth you can see the Hoe, where Drake played bowls when the announcement of the approach of the Armada was made; or you can go and look at the remarkable modern municipal buildings, remind-

Beyond all these ordinary matters of interest there are various definite means of amusement. Chess-boards and draughts are provided; cards are played in the smoking and dining saloons; ship-quoits can be played by means of a short thick stick being fastened in a board, and over the stick rope-quoits are thrown. Then there is "shuffle-board," played by means of flat heavy pieces of wood pushed along the deck by large spoon-shaped poles, and sent into squares with numbers marked in chalk. Another game, and one fresh to me this voyage, is "bull." It is somewhat like shuffle-board, only it is played by means of leaden disks, covered with canvas, and thrown on a white, slanting board. In the game your numbers are not counted to you unless you get them in regular succession from one upwards.

Another popular game played now on Australian and Indian steamers is marine cricket. The captain

of the *Oroya* was very considerate, and had a long strip of broad coconut matting laid down along the spacious deck. As the ship is nearly 500 feet long, and the saloon deck alone close on 300 feet long, there is ample room for a good game. Bats are kept on board. The boatswain or deck steward makes balls of rope. The stumps are fixed in thick boards. The sides of the ship are enclosed by netting, and the upper part of the play-space by the awning, so that the balls were not often lost. Some passengers played all day long. When the Australian cricketers came over they had cricket from morning to night. One day I had the pleasure of playing in a match of six gentlemen against seven ladies. We had to play with short sticks, and the ladies with bats. We had two innings, and then only beat the ladies by one. One lady actually bowled three gentlemen out with three successive balls! It will be seen that they were not opponents to be trifled with.

In the evening it is common to have singing and playing in the library. A piano and organ are provided there; but one on deck is kept in a case, both in the first saloon and in the second. Hence entertainments are easily promoted. One evening the first officer specially arranged one side of the ship's deck, draping it with flags and festooning it with strips of bunting. Eight electric lights were fixed up at one end of the deck by the electrician. All who took part were arrayed in various costumes. It was amusing to see them come in one by one to dinner

beforehand. A French abbé sat beside a Spanish brigand, a graceful Greek by the side of a Mexican mantilla-decked dame. One was dressed as Britannia, another as Scotland, and another as Ireland. Rome and Venice were represented. One was arrayed as a boatswain, another had borrowed the white garments of the chief cook, and his wife came as a French *bonne*. One had borrowed the uniform of an officer, another that of an ordinary seaman. Some were arrayed in the powdered and florid style of the last century. Mephistopheles also put in an appearance, and afterwards paid great attention to Young Rome. There was no masking either at dinner or afterwards. However strange the costumes, they appeared not to interfere with appetite.

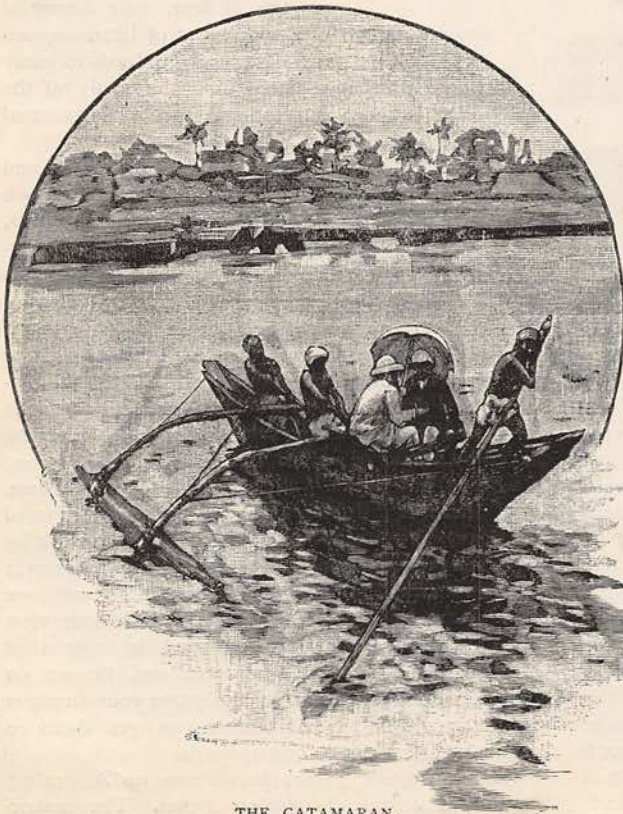
As we came through the Canal we had several times to tie up the steamer at one or other of the stations to allow other steamers to pass. As a good stretch of sand was just on our side, a number of the Maori football-players, who were returning to New Zealand, soon were down the gangway into a boat, leaping ashore, and three footballs speedily flying over the sands or high in air.

To pass steamers in the Canal was of interest. We enjoyed watching the signalling at stations on shore, for the Canal is worked on a system similar to the "block system" on railways. The ships passed close to us, and no little chaff went on between various passengers. The men of a great transport, homeward bound, jocosely taunted those bound to Australia with "Going the wrong way!" "Turn round!" they said. "England's the place!" "Home, sweet home!"

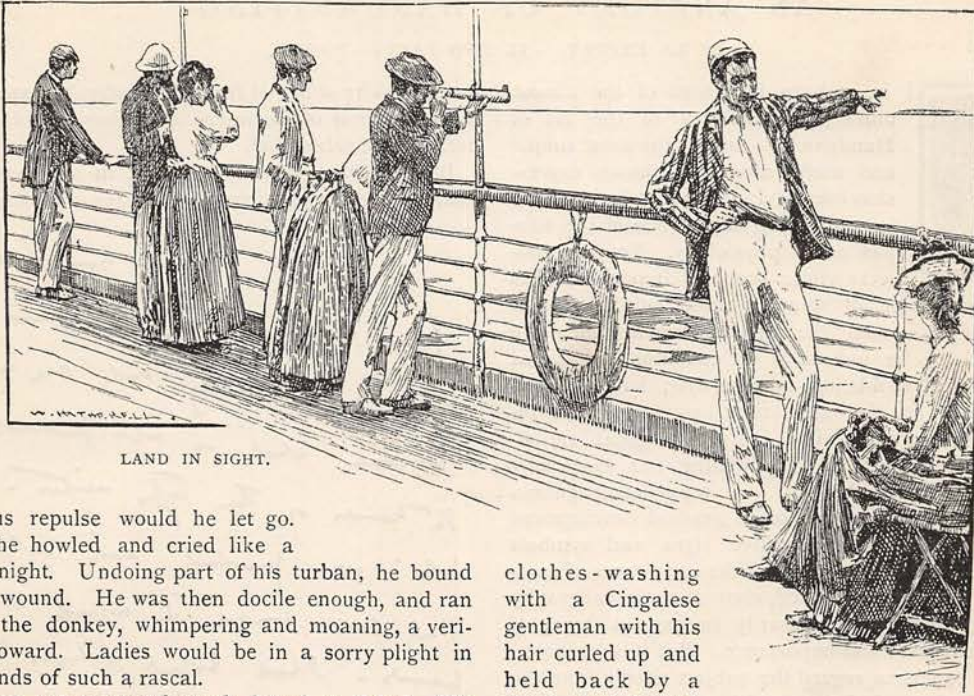
At Suez our ship had to coal, and we leaned long over the bulwark, watching the wiry fellaheen filling the baskets and handing them up. They seemed to chant in unison, in response to the lead of one of their number. I noticed that they did this at early morning and at midday, so I suppose they were performing their devotions while earning their daily bread. Work and prayer combined by these rough-looking fellows!

To watch the boatmen and to hear the haggling for money was an amusement. Then the donkey-men gave us much to think about. They are a strong, violent, greedy set. They have much humour; they called their donkeys by various English names, as "Mrs. Langtry," "Grand Old Man." One asked us whether we would ride "Scots wha' hae wi' Wallace bled?" He pronounced the Scotch capitally.

It is a two-mile ride from the wharf to the town of Suez, and the donkey-drivers seize the opportunity half-way to extort "backsheesh." One of our fellow-passengers was so beset that he slipped off his donkey and determined to walk. The man was so enraged at this that he seized hold of the traveller by his watch-chain, and not until he received a very



THE CATAMARAN.



LAND IN SIGHT.

vigorous repulse would he let go. Then he howled and cried like a cat at night. Undoing part of his turban, he bound up the wound. He was then docile enough, and ran beside the donkey, whimpering and moaning, a veritable coward. Ladies would be in a sorry plight in the hands of such a rascal.

Things are managed much better at Aden. We were struck with the contrast. There the strong hand of English orderliness controls boats, donkeys, and carriages.

No sooner was our steamer at anchor than our ears were saluted with vigorous cries in unison, "Have a dive?" A number of little black fellows, almost naked, had come off in tiny boats, and were ready to dive for money. It was amusing to see a number of little dark heads and very white teeth in the green waters. A copper or sixpence thrown into the water would immediately cause the black woolly heads to disappear, and only the white soles of a number of feet to be seen as they swam deep down to seize the sinking bit of copper or silver. They have no fear of the sharks, but would be ready to dive under one and kill it if they had a knife. Several leaped from the loftiest rail of our great steamer into the water for a sixpence. They made us laugh by pretending to fight in the water, tumbling over one another, and ducking to miss a blow, then coming up behind the opponent.

Colombo, in Ceylon, is soon reached, and here the *ennui* of the voyage is again broken. More revelations of Oriental life. What colour! what crowds of natives! what smells! We would not, however, have missed for a great deal the sight of the gaudily tinted and grotesquely decorated temple in the native quarter. Then the ride to land and back in one of those strange craft called a "catamaran" was a fresh experience and amusement. However the outriggers are kept clear of ropes and boats I don't know. Clever fellows, those Cingalese!

Here it will amuse you to have to arrange about

clothes-washing with a Cingalese gentleman with his hair curled up and held back by a large tortoiseshell comb. Your soiled garments will be taken on shore and brought back clean in three hours' time. Of course you pay extra for such alacrity. It was amusing to see one of these comb-tipped gentlemen, who had been delayed somewhat in receiving payment, go down the ladder at the ship's side, and finding the "catamaran" gone, leap into the water and swim after it. He left the bundle he carried to sink or swim as it liked.

In the Indian Ocean further interest is found in watching flying-fish skimming over the waves, or the great albatross cruising steadily after the ship; but amusements begin to pale over this greatest stretch of waters.

On Sundays we had some break to the monotony by the parade of all hands, and the inspection by the captain. Then there were the services on deck, or in the library when too rough for outside. Soon we were more interested in looking for land than in anything else. Yes, there at last is the bluff cape, the first headland of this continent under the southern cross. We are thankful to see it, and yet what a voyage we have had! It has been full of variety and joy. It has indeed been a simple pleasure-trip.

Upon landing at Adelaide we had a renewal of passenger pains, in the shape of customs inspection. We have come to a "protective" colony. The duties on imports are high; hence customs officers are rather strict. I was, however, treated most courteously, and the charges made as light as consistent with the rate of duties.

FRED HASTINGS.