

## Hurricane Jones—His Story about Isaac.

[Mark Twain in the Atlantic Monthly.]

There was a good deal of pleasant gossip about old Captain "Hurricane" Jones, of the Pacific ocean—peace to his ashes! Two or three of us present had known him; I, particularly well, for I had made four sea voyages with him. He was a very remarkable man. He was born in a ship; he picked up what little education he had among his shipmates; he began life in the forecastle, and climbed, grade by grade, to the Captaincy. More than fifty years of his sixty-five was spent at sea. He had sailed all oceans, seen all lands, and borrowed a tint from all climates. When a man has been fifty years at sea, he necessarily knows nothing of men, nothing of the world but its surface, nothing of the world's thoughts, nothing of the world's learning, but its A B C, and that blurred and distorted by the unfocused lenses of an untrained mind. Such a man is only a gray and bearded child. That is what old Hurricane Jones was—simply an innocent, lovable old infant. When his spirit was in repose he was as sweet and gentle as a girl; when his wrath was up he was a hurricane that made his nickname seem tamely descriptive. He was formidable in a fight, for he was of powerful build and dauntless courage. He was frescoed from head to heel with pictures and mottoes tattooed in red and blue India ink. I was with him one voyage when he got his last vacant space tattooed; this vacant space was around his left ankle. During three days he stumped about the ship with his ankle bare and swollen, and this legend gleaming red and angry out from a clouding of India ink: "Virtue is its own Rd." (There was a lack of room.) He was deeply and sincerely pious, and swore like a fisherman. He considered swearing blameless, because sailors would not understand an order unilluminated by it. He was a profound Biblical scholar—that is he thought he was. He believed everything in the Bible, but he had his own methods of arriving at his beliefs. He was of the "advanced" school of thinkers, and applied natural laws to the interpretation of all miracles, somewhat on the plan of the people who made epochs, and so forth. Without being aware of it, he was a rather severe satire on the modern scientific religionists. Such a man as I have been describing is rabidly fond of disquisition and argument; one knows that without being told it.

One trip the captain had a clergyman on board, but did not know he was a clergyman, since the passenger list did not betray the fact. He took a great liking to this Rev. Mr. Peters and talked with him a great deal; told him yarns, told him toothsome scraps of personal history, and wove a glittering streak of profanity through this garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech. One day the Captain said, "Peters, do you ever read the Bible?"

"Well, yes."

"I judge it ain't often by the way you say it. Now, you tackle it in dead earnest once, and you'll find it'll pay. Don't you get discouraged, but hang right on. First you won't understand it; but by and by things will begin to clear up, and then you wouldn't lay it down to rest."

"Yes, I have heard that said."

"And it's so too. There ain't a book that begins with it. It lays over 'em all, Peters. There's some pretty tough things in it—there ain't any getting round that—but you stick to them and think them out, and when once you get on the inside everything's plain as day."

"The miracles, too, Captain?"

"Yes, sir, the miracles, too. Every one of them. Now, there's that business with the prophets of Baal; like enough that stumped you?"

"Well, I don't know but—"

"Own up, now; it stumped you. Well, I don't wonder. You hadn't had any experience in raveling such things out, and naturally it was too many for you. Would you like to have me explain that thing to you, and show you how to get at the meat of these matters?"

"Indeed, I would, Captain, if you don't mind."

Then the Captain proceeded as follows: "I'll do it with pleasure. First, you see, I read and read, and thought and thought, till I got to understand what sort of people they were in the old Bible times, and

then after that it was all clear and easy. Now, this was the way I put it up, concerning Isaac\* and the prophets of Baal. There was some mighty sharp men amongst the public characters of that old ancient day, and Isaac was one of them. Isaac had his failings—plenty of them, too; it ain't for me to apologize for Isaac; he played it on the prophets of Baal, and like enough he was justifiable, considering the odds that were against him. No, all I say is, 'twan't any miracle, and that I'll show you so's't you can see it yourself.

"Well, times had been getting rougher and rougher for the prophets—that is, prophets of Isaac's denomination. There was four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal in the community, and only one Presbyterian—that is, if Isaac was a Presbyterian, which I reckon he was, but it don't say. Naturally, the prophets of Baal took all the trade. Isaac was pretty low-spirited, I reckon, but he was a good deal of a man, and no doubt he went a prophesying around, letting on to be doing a land office business, but 'twan't no use; he couldn't run any opposition to amount to anything. By and by, things got desperate with him; he sets his head to work and thinks it all out, and then what does he do? Why, he begins to throw out hints that the other parties are this and that and 'other—nothing very definite, may be, but just kind of undermining their reputation in a quiet way. This made talk, of course, and finally got to the King. The King asked Isaac what he meant by his talk. Says Isaac, 'Oh, nothing particular; only, can they pray down fire from heaven on an altar? It ain't much, may be, your Majesty, only can they do it? That's the idea.' So the King was a good deal disturbed, and he went to the prophets of Baal, and they said, pretty airy, that if he had an altar ready, they were ready; and they intimated he'd better get it insured, too.

"So next morning all the children of Israel, and their parents, and the other people gathered themselves together. Well, here was that great crowd of prophets of Baal packed together on one side, and Isaac walking up and down all alone on the other, putting up his job. When time was called, Isaac let on to be comfortable and indifferent; told the other team to take the first innings. So they went at it and the whole 450, praying around the altar, very hopeful, and doing their level best. They prayed an hour—two hours—three hours—and so on, plum till noon. It wasn't any use; they hadn't took a trick. Of course they felt kind of ashamed before all those people, and well they might. Now, what would a magnanimous man do? Keep still, wouldn't he? Of course. What did Isaac do? He graveled the prophets of Baal every way he could think of. Says he, 'You don't speak up loud enough; your god's asleep, like enough, or may be he's taking a walk; you want to holler, you know'—or words to that effect; I don't recollect the exact language. Mind, I don't apologize for Isaac; he had his faults.

"Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they knew how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At last, about sundown they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

"What does Isaac do, now? He steps up and says to some friends of his, there: 'Pour four barrels of water on the altar! Everybody was astonished; for the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he: 'Heave on four more barrels.' Then he says: 'Heave on four more.' Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water ran all over the altar, and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogheads—'measures,' it says; I reckon it means about a hoghead. Some of the people were going to put on their things and go, for they allowed he was crazy. They didn't know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and begun to pray; he strung along, and strung along about the heathens in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the State and the country at large, and about those that's in authority in the government, and all the usual programme, you know, till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then, all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the

under side of his leg, and pff! up the whole thing blazes like a house afire! Twelve barrels of water? Petroleum, sir, petroleum! that's what it was!"

"Petroleum, Captain?"

"Yes sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don't worry about the tough places. They ain't tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain't a thing in the Bible but what is true; all you want is to go prayerfully to work and cipher out how 'twas done."

## BY TELEGRAPH.

AMERICAN.

WASHINGTON, 13.—The ways and means committee authorize their chairman to report a concurrent resolution providing for the final adjournment of Congress on the 22nd, at 6 o'clock.

The Treasury Department decides that the agreement made with parties who turned states evidence in the Chicago whiskey cases be strictly adhered to.

The Ponca chiefs were each presented with a medal by Secretary Schurz, who bid them farewell for the Great Father, admonished them to select, as early as possible, their new homes, and promised material assistance.

The Senate Judiciary Committee have unanimously agreed to report favorably on Dawes' bill transferring the jurisdiction in divorce cases from the Probate Courts of Utah to the U. S. District Court for that Territory. The bill is designed to put a stop to the wholesale and injurious system of granting divorces which has been so notorious. Copies of the records of the Probate Court of Salt Lake City have been exhibited to the committee, showing that this one Court has, during the past three years, granted over 500 divorces, and that in several instances decrees were entered granting divorces on the same day that the application was made. The Supreme Courts of Indiana, Illinois, New York and Massachusetts, have already declared these Probate Court divorces to be illegal.

The prospect of a speedy report on the silver bill has been greatly lessened by the diversity of opinions made manifest in the Senate finance committee, to day, concerning the best method of procuring bullion for coinage and putting silver dollars into circulation. There seems to be considerable probability that the committee will divide into three equal parts on this question, and that the majority will then order the bill to be reported to the Senate without recommendation, thus leaving all questions for the discussion of that body. The bill will almost certainly fail to receive a final action this session, which is expected to end next week; but, of course, it will, like all other pending measures, retain its place on the calendar and come up as unfinished business for the next session.

GRINDSTONE CITY, Mich., 13.—The schooner *Berlin*, of Buffalo, struck a reef during the gale on Thursday night, and went to pieces. Capt. Johnson, and the cook, a colored man, name unknown, were drowned, the remainder of the crew clung to portions of the wreck all night and until 4 p.m. the next day, when they were reached by a lifeboat, and two of them rescued alive. The other two, the captain's son and a sailor, name unknown, having perished from exposure.

NEW YORK, 13.—A match game of billiards, 500 points up, three ball French caroms, for the championship of America, the Delaney badge and \$1,000 a side, was played to-night, between William Sexton and Cyrille Dion. Sexton won in the fifty-third inning, Dion being 428. The highest runs were: Sexton 54, 55, 59, 97; Dion, 42, 45, 51, 105.

COLUMBIA, S. C., 13.—L. Cass Carpenter, on trial for forgery, has been found guilty. Counsel gave notice for a new trial.

ST. LOUIS, 13.—At midnight a fire broke out in the engine room of a five-story building on Fourth Street, between Pine and Chestnut Streets, and opposite the Planter's House. The flames immediately ascended the elevator. All the rooms in the rear of the building, from the basement to the roof, are now in flames. John Bonnell's restaurant, in the rear of the building

is destroyed, and the fire has extended through Fourth Street and Front. The magnificent Chamber of Commerce building is only separated from the burning structure by a twenty foot area, but the wind is from the south-east. The flames are driven north-east, and the prospects now are that the building will not be injured beyond the possible breaking of the plate glass windows of the Merchant's Exchange Hall, which occupies the whole of the western side of the Chamber of Commerce building. The whole fire department is on duty.

The fire, at this writing, 1.30, is under control, and confined to the building in which it originated. The building was occupied by M. J. Steinberg's hat and fur store. His stock is said to be worth about \$70,000. The Chamber of Commerce building escaped with damage only to some twenty panes of plate glass.

EVANSVILLE, Ind., 13.—A fire, this evening, destroyed the moulding shop and one pattern room of Wm. Hellman's extensive foundry and machine shops; loss \$50,000; insured \$20,000 in eastern companies.

PHILADELPHIA, 13.—An agent of the Russian government is endeavoring to make a contract for an iron bridge across the Danube to be 2,100 feet long, have a single span, and cost about \$3,000,000. As the time of its construction is limited to the opening of a spring campaign, no contract has yet been made.

SAN FRANCISCO, 13.—The committee appointed by the Cigar Makers' Association to interview the cigar manufacturers of San Francisco and ascertain their views on the question of employing white labor instead of Chinese, have called upon various firms engaged in the trade. Most of the cigar manufacturers have been interviewed, and state that they are prepared to discharge all their Chinese employees as soon as a sufficient number of competent white men can be obtained to take their places. After the committee have called upon the other cigar manufacturers, they intend to apprise the cigar makers of New York of the prospect for them in this city, and hope to induce them to come here to supplant the Chinese.

NEW YORK, 14.—The *Times* Washington special says Col. Corbin, of the Sitting Bull Commission, has returned to Washington. The rest of the commission will reach here on Monday next, when they will commence preparations for their report. Corbin communicates some interesting facts in connection with Sitting Bull, which have not heretofore been published. He says the commission had a number of private interviews with Sitting Bull, and found him to be very agreeable in his manner and a very intelligent Indian. When the commission started on their return trip, Sitting Bull accompanied them for a number of miles, conversing freely about the business of the commission, and of the Custer campaign. Sitting Bull repudiated the idea that Custer and his men were massacred, and says it was a fair fight, in which the desperation of Custer, and the men under his command, made it necessary for the Indians to kill them. Sitting Bull says Custer charged upon his camp with great impetuosity, creating a temporary panic among them, but the Indians soon rallied, and outnumbering Custer, ten to one, they were enabled to surround him. He says Custer and his men refused to surrender, and fought until the last man was killed. He expressed great admiration for Custer's bravery and that of the men who were with him, and was sorry that his refusal to surrender made it necessary to put him to death. When the Indians discovered Major Reno, who was commanding the second division of Custer's forces, they supposed it was the entire force under the command of Terry, and immediately made preparations for retreat, sending their women and children forward. When Reno made his attack the Indians began to retreat, and Sitting Bull says had Reno followed them up at that time he might have captured the larger part of their train. Reno, however, discovering that the Indians were in such force, and ascertaining the fate of Custer, fell back to the place at which he entrenched himself, and from which he was relieved.

Louis Wallstein, manufacturer of

ladies' suits, has failed; liabilities \$75,000, assets \$53,000. Solomon Hyman, dry goods jobber, failed; liabilities \$60,000, assets \$35,000. The furniture factory of H. Lauter & Co., Williamsburg, was burned last night; loss \$48,000.

The *Herald's* Rome special says notwithstanding his debilitated condition the Pope gave audience to-day, for a period of exactly six minutes. He received five priests, six laymen, and eleven ladies, most of the priests being French. His Holiness was borne in by four palefreniers, and looked very pale and weak. During the six minutes' audience he never once moved his legs, but he moved his hands frequently and with apparent freedom. The appearance he presented was that of a man on the very brink of the grave, but who seemed to retain his mental faculties to a degree hardly to be expected under the circumstances. The few words he spoke referred principally to the political convulsions in France, about which he evidently feels very deeply. He counselled prayers for peace, so that France might be spared the horrors of another revolution. The pilgrims were much struck by the Pope's excessive feebleness.

The *Herald's* Washington special says, on the anti-resumption bill, that it is now generally believed it will pass the House. That the majority have determined to vote down all amendments, and that the bill will go to the Senate as it stands. The policy of the democratic leaders, if they have any, appears to be to let inflationists complete their rush in the House, as they are sure to be stopped in the Senate. The democrats do not yet seem to be aware that they control the House of Representatives, and that they can control the Senate for all wholesome and honest legislation, and against jobs, and that therefore they will be held responsible by the country for what passes in this Congress. Just at present there are more captains than high privates on the democratic side of the House; no discipline nor any leadership. This condition of things is attracting the attention of leading men, and begins to alarm them, as it ought.

The *Times*, on Senator Conkling's personal explanation in the Senate in regard to the *Herald* interview, says, "There is a story told of a man who shot at an animal in the underbrush so as to hit it if it were a deer and miss it if it were a cow. Conkling missed fire, and says it was a cow. As his so-called interview has raised a breeze, he has not held an interview for publication for months. Possibly if the interview had been well received, he would have said of it as he said of his Rochester performance, that he had nothing to take back, and nothing to be sorry for." The *Times* suggest there is but one way out of Conkling's dilemma, and that is for him to publish an edition of the conversation, revised and corrected by himself. It specifically suggests the inquiry whether he denies referring to "Little Evarts," and "Little Roberts."

HARRISBURG, 14.—Denny F. Canning, a Mollie Maguire, under sentence of seven years for conspiracy to murder, has obtained a recommendation for pardon.

CHICAGO, 14.—The body of Wm. F. Coolbaugh, President of the Union National Bank of this city, was found on the steps of the Douglas Monument, about six o'clock this morning. A revolver, with Mr. Coolbaugh's name on it, was lying near him.

An *Inter-Ocean's* letter from Atlanta, Ga., states that during President Hayes' recent visit to that city the man who was most active in the reception of the Presidential party was O. H. Jones, who, when his rebel command had captured a squad of eight Union men, hung them to one pole, and the rope of the Union leader, Adams, being so long that his feet touched the ground, Jones got a spade, and with his own hands dug from beneath Adams the earth, until he choked to death. The letter also asserts that Jones is one of the most abandoned of men, and that he was apparently put forward to do the honors of the occasion and escort Mrs. Hayes to the platform out of disrespect to the party.

WASHINGTON, 14. The delegation of New York and Philadelphia bankers, brokers and merchants, opposed to the House silver bill, now pending in the Senate, had an interview this morning with the President. Secretaries

\* This is the Captain's own mistake.