

St. Johns  
Antigua West Indies  
About 1846.

## Something about sharks

I think there's an ordinance of this city of St. Johns that all horses, cattle and animals of large size shall be carried out to sea, over the bar, and there cast adrift, at anyrate the custom stands. One morning, quite too early to be lifted out of a morning nap, a knock at the bedroom door resounded through the room and the servant proclaimed "A man in de yard say a horse goin down the habbah". I suppose a cry of "wreck on the north reef" couldn't make a body slip on some <sup>old</sup> clothes sooner, a swallow of tea & a nibble <sup>and the boots are on</sup> of toast and a promise to be back to breakfast sometime; and an "Oh! dear, what a nuisance" sounding in one's ears, ~~that's all~~ like a benediction and we are off. Some old ropes and a water glass are already on the boat, we are cast adrift and an <sup>easy</sup> breeze carries us down the harbor in chase of the "flat" towing the ~~horses~~ <sup>horses</sup>.  
The schooner <sup>Clifford</sup> is boarded and a harpoon, a short gun, a revolver, some more old rope and Capt Crabtree are stowed on with us and another start made. The Capt regaled ...

## Something About Sharks

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The a.m. schooner Clifford is boarded and a harpoon, a short gun, a revolver, some more old rope and a Capt Crabtree are stowed on with us and another start made. The Capt regaled ...

regales us on what he knows about sharks, the wonderful contents of their stomachs. All about how one of the sailors lost his hat and how quickly it was gobbled as it was nearing the water by an immense shark. How that shark was hooked on deck and the hat extracted, good as ever, along with a ~~little~~ ballast stone big as his head and an old tomato can already half digested. Just as we were about to launch a shark story on him <sup>big enough</sup> <sup>calculated</sup> to pulverize his ballast stone to powder the flat was caught up and the tow transferred to us. The found guile - a <sup>well</sup> on the bar and a good deal of disturbed <sup>muddy</sup> water. Our very slight & <sup>fragmentary</sup> ~~incidental~~ conversation almost fell to whispers as we momentarily expected to be surrounded by sharks. We looked around for the inevitable dorsal fin. Nary a fin. We soon condescended to look in the great deep around about us for the brown. We let the tow adrift and made a free gift to the sharks, but they condescended not. We took up the tow again and ~~disemboweled~~ <sup>ripped him</sup> him and made him ~~so~~ tempting to the palate if not to the eye but no sharks. In two hours time the party became cross and when one of the black boys

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the last occasion they had to cut the horse loose to prevent the sharks from swamping their boat, we had it in our hearts to make a Jonah of him - The verdict stood that on account of the late rough water the sharks had stood out to deeper seas - <sup>the tow was cut loose & it slowly bobbed out to deeper seas -</sup> a couple of weeks following another knock came. The sea & sky looked auspicious. In an hour's time we were sailing over the bar with another tow - a poor old cart horse going out with wind & tide to fill the maws of hungry sharks - in prospect. The darkies said on one return from the first trial that we ought to have hitched on to the <sup>steamer</sup> buoy and have waited until the sharks came. With this in view we slowly came up along side of the buoy and made the boat fast. We gave the tow plenty of line and waited for signs.

There was a steamer riding at anchor close by and as sharks customarily hung about these <sup>hanging</sup> steamers (sometimes as many as seven being seen at one time) it occurred to us that if we made the <sup>boat</sup> fast alongside the steamer that he would attract the monsters. So we sailed up, made fast, opened the tow so that the juices could permeate around and tickle the palates of our intended game on board and waited. The

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The Captain said they had seen one old  
fellow lazily poking around that morning.  
A half an hour passed by and no  
sharks in sight - he decided to go out  
to sea in deeper waters and look for  
them there. I transferred myself to the  
Captain's boat and ordered the boat [??] my boat to follow and if any signs were  
about to signal us. so he sailed on with  
the Captain and turned into deep bay to show  
him some fishing spots and a view of the  
coral bottom through the water glass. soon  
the tow passed and directly the boatmen  
made signals that sharks were about, he  
set sail for the tow and upon nearing,  
~~and~~ <sup>my</sup> outmen pointed out a brown ~~object~~  
lazily swimming just underneath the surface  
which I recognized at once as a good one  
of a length of about nine feet. He shyed  
off as we came up apparently frightened at  
our sail and by the time I had got into  
my boat he had left entirely. he cruised  
around for an hour after that. we let the  
tow adrift entirely and stood away. ~~but~~  
he made fast again with a long line  
he sailed slow we sailed fast all of no  
avail not <sup>one</sup> other shark put in <sup>an</sup> appearance  
and we cut the second tow adrift not  
altogether discouraged but very much disappointed  
and somewhat wiser, having learned by experience  
that sharks were not so plenty as reported and  
when found were not so ravenous.

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made fast again with along line. We  
sailed slow. We sailed fast. All of no avail.  
Not one shark put in an appearance and  
we cut the second tow adrift not  
altogether discouraged but very much  
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