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CHARLOTTE, N. C.

In the Interests of the Colored People
of the Country.

Able and well-known writers will contribute to its columns from different parts of the country, and it will contain the latest General News of the day.

THE MESSENGER is a first-class newspaper and will not allow personal abuse in its columns. It is not sectarian or partisan, but independent—dealing fairly by all. It reserves the right to criticize the shortcomings of all public officials—commending the worthy, and recommending for election such men as in its opinion are best suited to serve the interests of the people.

It is intended to supply the long felt need of a newspaper to advocate the rights and defend the interests of the Negro-American, especially in the Piedmont section of the Carolinas.

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SELECT SIFTINGS.

Kentucky has a banana fiend, who recently ate thirty-four bananas in one hour.

Samatra has a flower which grows to nine feet in circumference and weighs fifteen pounds.

Herodotus, the first Greek historian, and father of history, lived, according to Cicero, about 450.

The eggs of a single sturgeon, counted by Frank Beckland, numbered 921,600, and weighed forty-five pounds.

The first historical mention of soap occurs in Pliny and Ga'en, the former attributing its invention to the Gauls.

In the superstition of sailors there is a connection between white horses and preachers. Both are believed to bring bad luck to the vessel carrying them.

A man shoveling dirt with a shovel one pound heavier than it need be will lift 6,000 pounds more in a day of ten hours than he would with a shovel one pound lighter.

William J. Miller, of Charleston, S. C., has two immense iron shells, said to be the first two shots fired at Battery Wagner at the beginning of the Civil war. The shells were never exploded. They weigh 299 pounds each.

Louis Baylen, a blind man who died at Worcester, Mass., the other day, had his sense of touch so developed that he could tell the denomination of a bank-note by feeling it, and in weighing a large garden he could always distinguish a young vegetable plant from a weed.

Next year (1888) will be a peculiar one in this respect: That the last three numerals which compose it will be the same figures, a circumstance which can only occur once in a century, or more strictly speaking, once in every 111 years, as it will be 111 years before another "three of a kind" (1999) will be reached.

There is a colored man in a New York hospital who has a patch of light-colored skin on his back. It was grafted there, he having lost the original cuticle by falling against a roller in a shoe factory. The pieces were taken from the arms of a young medical student. At first the transplanted skin remained white, but it is said to be slowly turning black.

An animal with the head and tail of an alligator, and the back and claws of a tortoise, is on exhibition at the store of George Hulse, a Liverpool (England) importer of turtles. It is called an alligator tortoise, and was captured by an English sailor in the swamps near New Orleans. The English naturalists have never seen anything like it before, and are trying to buy it for a public museum.

A Singular Woman.

She does not boast, makes no display, But modestly she fills her station. Though she's an object, people say, Of wonder and of admiration. As school miss, maiden fair, or wife To every one declares that's met her. She never added to her life A postscript when she wrote a letter. —Boston Courier.

TO-MORROW.

The future ours? Ah, no;
It is the gods' alone!
The hours are ringing low
"Farewell" in every tone.
The future! Think! Beware!
Our earthly treasures rare,
Hard won through toil and care,
Our palaces and lands,
Great victories, and all
Possessions, large and small—
But only to us fall,
As birds light on the sands!
—Victor Hugo.

THE WONDERFUL ISLAND.

In a book entitled "Adventures by Land and Sea," which I picked up the other day, I saw a brief reference to the strange adventures of Captain Wheaton, of the ship Starlight. Among all the fore-castle yarns I ever heard, that story takes the medal, and when I am through relating it the reader will be as much mystified as I have always been regarding it. Indeed, I never yet met a sailor who did not firmly believe in the truth of Captain Wheaton's every statement. I tell the story because I was an actor in the first and last chapters.

It was in October, 1859, that I shipped as second mate on the Starlight, which was then lying in the port of Honolulu. She was an old whaler, and had been sold at auction and cheaply refitted for a voyage to Lima and return, in the interests of some California shippers. We left port in ballast only, and were two men short of our complement. Capt. Wheaton was a Barn-gat man, and the crew all English-speaking people, and for the first fortnight no ship ever had better weather. The Captain, as I understood him, was an earnest conscientious man, being above the average in point of intelligence, and of strictly temperate habits. The first mate brought a demijohn of whiskey aboard the day before sailing, but the Captain made him ship it ashore at once, and he cautioned the fore-castle men that he would clap the man in irons who was found the worse for liquor. The men used to slyly refer to him as "the Sunday-school Superintendent," and I believe he was good enough to have filled the bill.

At the end of the fortnight the fine weather was broken by a rousing gale, which struck us during my night watch, and all hands had to be called. We had a hard time of it during the first hour, and were finally compelled to lie to, and it was while we were bringing the ship to the wind that the Captain was washed overboard by a heavy sea which boarded us.

With him went one of the sailors, the hencoops, several spare spars and booms, and a lot of deck raft, and by the time the ship had shaken herself clear of the foam it was too late to render any assistance. Indeed, it was a serious question just then whether any of us would live another half hour. The storm did not break for nearly twenty-four hours, and the old ship was so strained and knocked about that her life was ended. The gale had scarcely abated when she began to leak faster than the pumps could throw the water out, and on the seventeenth day of the voyage we had to abandon her. When we had been afloat for four days in the open boats we were picked up by the American bark Yankee Boy, bound from Boston to San Francisco. We were then to the north of the equator, and fully 100 miles from the Galapagos Islands. These islands lie a good distance to the left of the true course from Honolulu to Lima, and at that date every one of them was well known, and all were inhabited by natives who could speak more or less English.

Now, as we got the gale dead from the North, and as the sea of the sea was Southward for several days, Captain Wheaton could not possibly have floated toward the Galapagos. He must have been driven down toward the equator, or possibly toward the Marquesas group, although to reach any of those islands he would have had to drive for hundreds of miles and for days and weeks. How was a man swept overboard in a gale to sustain himself above a few hours, even if not drowned at once? Ask yourself these questions, and you will answer them as all others have done, and you will be as greatly mystified over the Captain's story.

On the fourth day of September, 1860, as the English whaling ship Lady Bascombe was nearing the equator, being about midway between the Marquesas group and the Galapagos, and the time being 11 o'clock at night, she was hailed from out of the darkness, and five minutes later had Captain Wheaton aboard. He had then been afloat for three days and a half on a small but well-constructed raft, which was provided with a sail, and had carried him safely and buoyantly an estimated distance of 120 miles. The Captain was in good health and spirits, but could answer no questions until he had seen the Captain of the Bascombe. The sailors knew that he must have been wrecked, but that he should be alone and in such seeming good health in that dreary spot was a great mystery to them. Captain Moore of the Bascombe had heard of the loss of the Starlight, and when Captain Wheaton introduced himself he created a big sensation. He was at first taken for an impostor, but he had letters and documents in his pocket to prove his identity at once. That being settled, he told his story. I have heard him tell it four or five times over, and can relate it almost word for word.

When Captain Wheaton was swept overboard he gave himself up for lost. He got out one look at the ship, and realizing that she was driving away from him and he was beyond rescue, he ceased swimming and hoped to drown at once. Just then a hencoop floated within reach, and in a second he changed his mind and fastened to the float. He was clear on the point of floating all that day and

far into the night. Then he lost consciousness, but did not let go of his float. He remembered nothing of the next day until about an hour before sundown, when he opened his eyes and came to his senses to find himself lying on the sands, his float near by, and the storm calmed away. He was stiff and sore and bewildered, and he crawled further up the shore and went to sleep again, and it was sunrise before he again opened his eyes. An hour later he knew that he was on an island about three miles long by one mile wide. It was well wooded, containing several springs of fresh water, and there was an abundance of wild fruits to sustain life. There was not an inhabitant or sign of one, nor did he find any living thing except birds and monkeys.

Wheaton was not only a good seaman, but a well educated and well posted man, and he had sailed on the Pacific for many years. There was hardly an island in that ocean which he had not set foot on and could recognize by sight again. After a bit he began to figure on his location, and he made out that he had been driven ashore on an unknown and uncharted island lying very close to the equator, and in longitude 120 degrees west. This put him midway, on a northeast and southwest line, between the Marquesas group and the Galapagos Islands. He had visited both groups, and as both were inhabited at that time he could not have been mistaken in his location had he gone ashore on any one of them. He found proofs satisfactory to himself that the island was of volcanic origin, not over twelve or fifteen years old, and that the luxuriant vegetation was due to the tropical climate. The birds, of which there were several species, could perhaps have flown there from some of the other islands, but how the monkeys reached the spot was a puzzle the Captain never got over. That he found 'em there was proved when he was rescued, there being two wet animals on the raft.

When the castaway came to walk around his island he found the wreck of the Scotch brig McNeil on the east shore, and the wreck of the California ship Golden Bar on the west coast. Both craft had been reported lost with all on board two or three years before. The one was a whaler and the other a trader. The Captain not only said he found them, but he had proof again. He had the name board of the ship and some papers belonging to the brig. He found and buried the skeletons of thirteen sailors, and among the debris of the wrecks he secured a large quantity of clothing, considerable money, some bedding, a lot of tools, ropes, boards, and planks, and within a week he began the work of building a boat to enable him to escape.

I always felt that the old man must have had a jolly life of it for the ten months and over he was on what he called "Wheaton's Island," but he dwelt on the fact that it was terribly lonely. It went harder with him, because he had a wife and six children, and he knew that they would be mourning his death. He put in two months on his boat, and had just got her finished when a storm set in and she broke her moorings and drifted out to sea. Anxiety and exposure, aided by the worry about the folks at home, laid the old man on his back for several weeks, and he probably had a close call from slipping his cables. He got up slowly, and as he had been wasting his materials, he found that he must turn to a raft if he ever got away. He worked at it at odd hours, being ill and despondent, for several months, and when it was finished he hesitated a full month before making a start, hoping every day to sight a sail. He had a signal flying by day, and almost every night he kept a fire going, but rescue never came.

One day, two weeks before he set out on his voyage, the Captain made a great discovery. In a rough, wild place, in the center of the island, where a mass of rock was thrown up in great confusion, he found a lump of gold as big as your fist. Aye! more than that, he found masses of it so heavy that he could not lift them. These chunks, he said, were as pure as his big nugget, and that I not only held in my hand, but saw the certificate of assay reading that it was 91 per cent. pure gold. He sold it at the mint in San Francisco for over \$12,000, and that in my presence. In the course of three or four days the Captain piled up such a heap of gold on his island that he dared not estimate its value. There was enough to make a dozen men rich for life, and more to be had with picks and iron bars. Then the demon of avarice would not let him wait any longer for rescue. Indeed, he did not want to be rescued. He made his raft ready, cut branches and pulled grass to hide his nuggets, and set sail with a fair wind to the northeast, hoping to get into the track of ships bound for the Sandwich Islands. He was picked up as I have told you, but he found a tough nut in the English Captain. He had to believe that Captain Wheaton had left some island and not far away, for there was the man and there was the raft. He couldn't have made himself believe that the island was one of the group to the east or west, but yet he wouldn't believe in a nearer island because it wasn't charted. He simply jumped to the conclusion that the castaway had suffered and endured until his mind was off its balance. This was natural enough in one sense, but when Wheaton came to show him the relics from the two wrecks, and when the two monkeys were skipping about on deck, any one but an Englishman would have been convinced.

Captain Wheaton was sharp enough to withhold his big secret until he had learned something of the Englishman. When he found all his stories and assertions discredited he held his tongue, and let them believe he was light in the top story. He was taken to the Sandwich Islands as a castaway, and thence, with money found on his unknown island, he paid his passage to San

Francisco. It was at this latter port he found me, and within two hours after meeting him I had his story. I had no reason to doubt its entire truth. Three or four others were taken into the secret, and we formed a syndicate to go after the gold. I had had a legacy of \$3,000 from an aunt, and five of us chipped in an equal amount and bought a schooner and fitted her out and manned her. Something of Captain Wheaton's wonderful adventure got into the papers, and there was great anxiety to find out where we were going. We had ten times as many men offer their services as we could accept, and when the story of the big lump of gold was whispered around two other craft fitted out to follow us. We went out of the harbor on a dark and stormy night, and two or three days before we were supposed to be ready, and thus gave them the slip. One of the vessels stood up the coast when ready to come out, and the other heeled for the Sandwich Islands and was lost in a gale.

As the Captain had \$9,000 in the enterprise, and had not even wanted to visit his family, who were only 250 miles from San Francisco, the reader must credit him with honestly believing all he asserted. As I had an equal amount invested, the reader must believe that I am writing of things as they honestly looked to me. How could I or any one else disbelieve? There was the nugget, there were the papers and relics, and the English Captain knew of the raft and its lone passenger being picked up 700 miles from any known land. There wasn't the least difficulty in making others believe, either. I think we could have raised \$200,000 capital if there had been need of it. The trouble was to keep capitalists and speculators out.

Wheaton had no sooner been rescued than he asked for the Englishman's latitude and longitude. Then he figured on the direction and strength of the wind and progress of his raft, and he had the location of his island down to within five miles. I have had miners and geologists tell me that no gold was ever found in a volcanic upheaval from the sea. If not, where did the Captain get that big lump? There is no gold on any charted island in the Pacific, and he certainly could not have drifted to or put off on his raft from the coast of South America. It is easy enough to sneer at a story, but not so easy to get around cold facts.

We had a fine run to Honolulu, and remained there for a week to make some needed repairs and lay in more provisions and water. Capt. Wheaton then met fellow Captain named Bridges, who commanded a New Bedford whaler, and without a suspicion of what he was doing this man greatly discouraged us. He had just come in from a long cruise, which the chart showed must have taken him very near the unknown island. He had not sighted it, but the logbook reported that when in that neighborhood something like an earthquake had occurred. Indeed, one did occur, and a new island was born to the Galapagos group. The ship rocked violently in mid-ocean, and a sort of tidal wave came near being her destruction. Next day the whaler encountered many green trees floating about, and he said to Capt. Wheaton that he had no doubt some island had been overwhelmed. He had no suspicion of our errand, and related the above simply as an adventure. However, from that hour we all lost heart. Figure as we would we could not shake off the conviction that it was the unknown island which had been destroyed in the same manner as it was born.

After a long and tedious run from the Sandwich Islands, we finally drew near the location. Then for days and days we sailed to and fro, and at length realized that the island had gone. It was not there, to enrich us and prove the Captain's story, but still we found proofs. We discovered more than one hundred trees floating about as we sailed this way and that, and after we had given up all hopes we made a still greater find. The boat which Wheaton had built and lost turned up there on that vast expanse of sea. It was sighted from the mast-head one morning, and two hours later we had it alongside. It was water-logged, but floating well enough for all that, and its find was the strongest link in the whole chain. We hoisted her on board and brought her to San Francisco to exhibit to the silent stockholders in our enterprise, and that relic was the only thing we could show them. The story has been told and retold among sailors in various ways, and portions of it have been published, but I have given it entire and correctly for the first time. Officers of the survey service of both England and America have denied that any such island existed even for a month; but I ask the reader, and I have often asked myself: "If not, what land could Capt. Wheaton have reached in so short a time?" He knew every foot of his island and drew a map of it. No other island would answer the description. He built a boat and we found it. He built a raft, and it bore him into the track of ships. He found gold, and he found and saved papers and relics which settled the fate of two missing vessels. That island was born in ten seconds when the bottom of the sea upheaved. Why shouldn't it have been destroyed just as quickly? It is not the only one which has come and gone, and the fact of its remaining until covered with timber and vegetation was no guaranty that it would always remain. That's my story, gentlemen, and if you are unsatisfied you are no worse off than your humble servant, who lost his all in the venture. —New York Sun.

Queen Victoria's titles sound very modest compared with those of the King of Burmah. He is "the King of Kings, the cause of the preservation of all animals, the regulator of the seasons, the absolute master of the ebb and flow of the sea, brother to the sun, and King of the four-and-twenty umbrellas."

Human Bodies Turned Into Stone.

Dakota is truly a marvellous and wonderful country, says a letter from Rapid City to the Milwaukee Sentinel: Not only wonderful in mineral and agricultural resources, but it abounds in geological formations that afford constant surprise and study for the student in this most interesting science. The Bad Lands, located seventy miles southeast of this point, have no equal on this continent as a receptacle for petrifications of amphibious animals. The peculiarity of the soil transforms flesh into stone, but this power is not only confined to the soil of the Bad Lands, but exists in many localities in the Black Hills. A case has just come to the knowledge of your correspondent that has never been made public, and proves that many bodies buried in the Hills have turned to stone. The case at hand is that of a little son of Mr. Eugene Holcomb, a prominent citizen of Rapid City. Some years ago the boy died and was buried in a spot not set aside for general burying purposes. When the city grew and a cemetery was selected Mr. Holcomb had a large monument erected, and the departed disinterred. The family expected when the shovel of the grave-digger reached the casket it would need replacing and had made preparations to that end. The coffin was reached, and as the man endeavored to place a rope underneath to twist it to the surface, he was surprised at its great weight. Thinking it was the narrow, contracted hole that reduced his strength, he made several more efforts, but only moved it a few inches, and was compelled to call for aid. Two men succeeded in placing the rope about the casket, and with a hard pull it was brought to the surface. An examination followed, and upon the deceased being revealed it was found that the body had turned into solid rock. From a gentleman who was present and whose word can be relied upon, it was learned that the parents easily recognized the child. The body had assumed a dark-brown color, the features slightly shrunken, and he compared it with the appearance of a mummy. The eyebrows and hair were of a lighter hue, while the hands looked perfect. It was the most singular sight he had ever witnessed, and only the sensitive feelings of the parents kept the matter from the newspaper columns. The body was again interred, and now rests peacefully in the family lot for aught we know.

The strange transformation of this body is not the only instance recorded. The small number of dead removed has not afforded an opportunity to learn how common an occurrence this may be, but learned gentlemen tell me that when the disintering of bodies becomes necessary in the Black Hills country many bodies will be found turned to stone. The other instance related is that of Wild Bill, murdered in Deadwood by Jack Call ten years ago. Bill was buried on the mountain side, and the building of residences compelled the unearthing of his bones. What was the surprise of his friends when they discovered that the famous frontiersman was a solid stone—petrified. This revelation may appear strange to Eastern readers, but here it is an open secret.

The Signs of Drunkenness.

The symptoms of drunkenness, be it observed, are all paralytic, and are all due to loss of nervous power and of voluntary control. The flushing of the face shows the paralysis of the small blood vessels; soon the slipshod utterance shows the want of voluntary control over some of the muscles of articulation; the double vision indicates the loss of accommodating power in the eyes, and the staggering gait shows that the larger muscles; lastly, the drunkard falls prostrate in a condition so closely resembling apoplexy that the most experienced occasionally fail rightly to distinguish the one from the other. If the intemperate use of alcohol be persisted in there soon results a degeneration of all the tissues of the body. The nervous tissues are, perhaps, the first to suffer, and the shaking hand and tottering gait are infallibly followed by a similar tottering of the intellectual and moral faculties. The stomach resents the constant introduction into it of ardent spirits, and soon refuses properly to digest food. The liver and kidneys give out in a similar way, and the impairment of their functions causes terrible dropsy. The heart gets fatty and weak, the lungs lose their fresh elasticity and soon there is not a tissue in the body which has not, in one way or another, succumbed to the ill-treatment to which it has been subjected.—The Family Physician.

The \$10,000 Prize for Jute.

It is well known that for some years past, a prize of \$10,000 has been offered to inventors for the first ten bales of jute grown and prepared for market in the United States, at a cost which will admit of successful competition with that from India. The principal and apparently insurmountable obstacle which confronts all efforts in this direction is the lack of a machine which will prepare the jute fiber for use at a cost low enough to offset the very cheap hand labor of India. In the jute plant the fiber lies between the pith and the bark. It is necessary, therefore, to remove the latter and separate the jute from the pith, it being essential that this be done without injury to the fiber, which is one of the most delicate known. But as the natives of India do this work for seven to ten cents a day, a substitute machine would not only have to overcome this matter of cheapness, but would have to perform the task in as perfect a manner as is now done by Indian fingers, as well as equal in other stages to the work of preparation required before the fiber is ready to enter the factory.—Boston Herald.

A STRANGE INDIAN DANCE.

QUEER PERFORMANCES IN AN ARAPAHOE TEPEE.

A Squaw's White and Copper-Colored Partners, all Jumping and Howling—Singular Osculation.

The night of my arrival at Fort Reno was bright and clear, writes Leo Meriwether in the *Cassopolitan*. The garrison was strong; the Indians were held well in check. I was not troubled with fears of personal safety. A noise of voices and drums floated through the still night air from the tepees several miles away. Mr. Curtis, one of the Fort scouts, saddled a couple of horses, and after supper we galloped across the level prairie in the moonlight to attend an Arapahoe dance.

On reaching the village we singled out the tepee whence issued the noise of drums and voices, and crawling through the door—a hole in the canvas about three feet high—found ourselves among thirty or forty painted bucks and squaws. The squaws were huddled on the ground in one corner of the tepee; in the opposite corner crouched the painted braves. An old drum was on the ground in the centre of the tepee; around it squatted six men lustily beating the drum, and at the same time bawling at the top of their powerful lungs. No notice was taken of our entrance. We quietly placed ourselves in the braves' corner.

Presently a squaw arose, and with a kind of reeling motion advanced toward us. She glanced a moment at a row of bucks, then tapped one on the head; he arose and stood in silence. The squaw scanned again the faces before her. She seemed about to tap me on the head, but hesitated, and finally bestowed her favor upon Mr. Curtis. He arose to his feet; the squaw placed herself between her two partners, her face looking in the opposite direction from which they looked; then putting her arm around the two men's necks, all three began springing up and down, howling in concert with the howls of the men beating the drum.

Other squaws came forward, selected partners, and joined in the strange dance. I congratulated myself on being a wallflower; but my self-congratulations were premature, for when the row of braves was pretty well thinned out, a kind-hearted maid took pity on my loneliness and tapped me on the head. Her other partner was a villainous-looking Indian, who could doubtless have run all day without tiring. Certainly the springy motion, which was excessively fatiguing to me, did not seem to please him. Moka Wolftrack (that was the name of my squaw partner) was un-parading in the looks of contempt she bestowed on the tenders-foot pale-face from the East.

At the conclusion of the dance, after springing up and down until completely exhausted, my partner did a singular thing; she turned and gave me a kiss square on the mouth! I submitted without what seemed to me a very good grace indeed, but Moka nevertheless gave me another savage look, abruptly removing her arm from round my neck and retreated to her corner, apparently disgusted as well as offended. My offense, as I subsequently learned, lay in not transmitting from my mouth to hers, when she kissed me, some bead or other trinket, as is customary. Mr. Curtis, who was acquainted with the custom, transferred to his partner, by a kiss, a bright blue bead, and so came out of the dance with as much eclat as though he were a real Indian instead of a mere Indian scout.

Moorish Horsemanship.

Now and then a stranger, the owner of a good horse, and a man having confidence in his own horsemanship, declines to join the bands of riders. He prefers showing off on his own account. "Who is he? Where does he come from?" and similar inquiries are heard as he rides down the line of spectators in a preparatory walk. He seems pleased rather than the reverse to hear these remarks, especially so when some rather uncomplimentary surmises are ventured upon about himself or steed. Presently down comes this unknown Knight in all his glory! Upright he stands upon his stirrups—high above his horse's neck—with gun to shoulder. Now he points to the right, now to the left, now to the front, and then suddenly twisting round he lets fly his gun as if at some pursuing enemy. There is a murmur of applause as he leisurely walks his horse back, and each time as he returns he earns by some new feat the approving shouts of the delighted crowd. In his last round his steed is galloping faster than ever, but the rider seems tired and careless. However, like a thought—like a flash of lightning—he is suddenly standing on his feet in his saddle, with gun to shoulder. As the weapon blazes away he seems to split in two, and, with a thud, he is once more astride of his steed, which this time is not checked, but gallops off with him, back, probably, to Fez or Morocco, where the Sultan has an army of such horsemen.—St. James's Gazette.

Jumping Beans.

One of the queer freaks of Nature is shown by Mr. E. C. Bassett in the shape of a couple of seeds, each about the size of a Rio coffee bean, and exceedingly brown and hard. They look as if naturally broken, in an irregular way, or at least as if they were not whole. They are called "the Mexican jumping bean," and if placed on a table or plate, or even the human hand, they will turn over and jump about. It is a kind of quivering motion, and the jump is not great; but it is enough to turn them over, and sometimes to send them a little way out of their places. They were brought from Mexico to Florida, from which region Mr. Bassette received them.—Hartford Times.