

The Davie Record.

"HERE SHALL THE PRESS, THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS MAINTAIN; UNAWED BY INFLUENCE AND UNBRIBED BY GAIN."

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Common Superstitions of the South.

T. M. Peacock, in Southern Ruralist. In nearly every human heart there is a trace of superstition; this more strongly in evidence in the learned and ignorant. The South-darkey possesses this trait in a marked degree.

The screech owl, with its shrill, ever crying coming around the home of a darkey at night will give him horrors as he considers it a sure sign of the death of a member of the family. You will see the shovel and tongs quick thrust into the fire, pockets turned inside out, or cuffs turned up, these being the charms supposed to drive the unwelcome intruder away.

"Jes' knowed Sarah Ann's little gwine die," said old Aunt Chloe to me on hearing of the death of a little negro girl of the community, "case I heard dat old screech owl hollerin' round dese several nights while she was sick."

My old nurse would never sweep under the bed in which any one was lying sick, nor would she pour water on the fire in the room of a sick person, as these things are thought to exercise an evil influence over the disease, possibly being a fatal termination.

Something bad is surely expected to happen to the person who sees a new moon through the trees over his left shoulder. A darkey never turns back for anything forgotten without first making a cross mark on the ground and spitting on it to prevent bad luck.

In some districts, the darkies have a strange custom of laying a "born baby" on the floor and sweeping around it, thus, as they say, sweeping away all cares and troubles from its future life.

If a rabbit crosses the road in front of a darkey and goes to the left, the darkey proceeds on his way rejoicing, expecting only the results from his errand or money; but if the rabbit goes to the right he loses heart, thinking bad luck will come to him. A darkey considered especially desirable is the possessor of the left hind foot of a graveyard rabbit; but no darkey would kill a graveyard rabbit to obtain one.

"Miss Marthy, company's comin' to dinner," said the cook one day, "I drapped de dish cloth on de floor, and de old red rooster, he flew up on de fence and crow'd dese times."

Other signs of company coming are the scissors dropping and sticking up in the floor, or a chunk of wood falling down from the fire. There is a burning, tingling sensation of the ears, a darkey will tell you that some one is talking of you if of the right ear, they are saying something good of you; if of the left ear, something bad. To step on the toe of the right foot, you think, is a sign that you will be a welcome visitor at the place which you are going; to stomp on the toe of the left foot, you will be welcome.

Aunt Chloe finds a pin on the floor with the point toward her, she picks it up with a smile of satisfaction—that is good luck; but if the head of the pin is toward her she thinks that is bad luck; she wards off the evil by walking around until the point of the pin is toward her and then picks it up.

Southern cooks always insist on cooking hog jowl and peas on New Year's Day. This is supposed to ward you against want during the year. There is a couplet commonly quoted:

"Eat hog jowl and peas
And live at your ease"
Aunt Chloe always saves the fat of the hog jowl to rub her hands with "when I has derheumatiz," she said. "I always rubs wid dem

to ease my pains."

Many darkies have a habit of wearing silver dimes in their shoes as a charm to keep away witches and evil spirits.

It is considered bad luck to meet a funeral procession. I have known darkies to turn around and go a mile out of their way rather than meet and pass one.

The negroes have a peculiar superstition that when a person is buried the tools used in digging the grave must not be carried from the cemetery until the day after the burying. They tell you some one in the community will die soon unless the tools are left all night in the cemetery.

A negro will never burn the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning; to do this is thought to bring the worst kind of luck.

The old darkies are strong believers in "conjuring," as they call it. A negro woman living near my home came over one day in great distress to tell me that she was being "conjured." She said that every morning when she arose she found something white like flour sprinkled around her house. She had an enemy, she said, who was trying to bring her under an evil spell. So firmly was she convinced of this that she left a good place and moved to another part of the country.

I have seen old darkies whose limbs were drawn with rheumatism, who would tell me with the utmost sincerity that they had snakes, frogs and lizards in their limbs and body—placed there by the "conjurer."

A few years ago there lived on my uncle's plantation a stout, healthy negro girl of about seventeen years of age. Coming in from the field one day and, being warm and tired, she lay down on some planks in the yard and fell asleep. While she was sleeping a negro boy came by and, in a spirit of mischief, cut off a lock of her hair and ran out of sight before she was sufficiently aroused to see who it was. Placing her hand upon her head and finding the lock of hair gone, she made a great lamentation and would not be comforted, saying that some one had taken her hair away to "conjure" her. From this time she grew sad and melancholy, lost her appetite, and finally grew sick of fever. In her delirium she would start up wildly and beg some one to bring her hair back to her.

One day, in a conscious interval, she called her mother and said: "Mammy, I'm dying, but if you will jes' git me back that lock of hair I will get well." But her mother did not know who had the hair, so in a few days the poor girl died, a victim of her delusion.

Poor Uncle Solomon Johnson for a number of years had been crippled with rheumatism, and, as he was not able to work, the good things of life were very slow about coming his way. At last he died, and, as is usually the case when a negro dies, all his friends and kindred gathered from near and far to enjoy the "gettin' up" and the funeral.

Uncle Sol having suffered with rheumatism for so long his knees were drawn up, and when he was dressed they found it impossible to straighten them; but, at night, after he was laid out and they were waiting for the coffin, the watchers in that little hillside cabin witnessed a strange sight. Uncle Sol's knees suddenly straightened out and his feet slipped to their proper places. Immediately the superstition in the darkey nature asserted itself.

"Did you see dat?" was asked "My Lord, what's dat?"

No one wanted to answer questions. There was a rush for the door and the little cotton patch around the cabin gave evidence of

the haste with which the panic-stricken darkies fled, for the white, fleecy locks were scattered over the field.

The preacher, being a good runner, was a little in advance of the others, but, taking a short cut through the branch, he became entangled in some bamboo vines, and, being in a hurry, he could not extricate himself. Having a dread of being left alone so near the fearful cabin, he endeavored to stay the fleeing darkies. "What you niggers runnin' for?" he asked. "Dere ain't nuffin to be feared of. You all is just de biggest fools I ever seen in my life." It was in vain he called to them. They left him to his fate and tarried not until the doors of their own homes closed upon them.

Superstition is dying out to some extent. It is not so common as it was a few years ago. Education is doing much to relieve the negro mind of those old foolish superstitions.

Will Grow 'Possums For Market.

Asheville Citizen. Believing that there is always a market for a well fed, fat 'possum, Thomas Israel, of Henderson county, has conceived and put into execution the novel idea of raising 'possums to order, and to carry out his idea, has enclosed a large plot of ground on his place near Hendersonville, stocked it with 'possums and is sitting back waiting for his profits to materialize.

Members of the opossum tribe, made famous by former President Taft, multiply very rapidly, Mr. Israel says, and he also thinks that the presence of the domesticated animals will attract large numbers of their brethren from the nearby hills and vales. Figuring all these factors into the proposition, he expects to have about 2,000 'possums of marketable age at the end of two years.

'Possums now bringing from four to six bits (fifty to seventy five cents) apiece, and their skins, when properly prepared, bring an equal amount. Figuring every possible catastrophe into the account, Mr. Israel thinks he can raise the savory delicacy at a cost of about twenty-five cents a head. Based on his other figures, this would give a net profit of from a dollar to a dollar a quarter on every animal.

Mr. Israel has not decided to attempt to corner the 'possum market as yet, but he is in deadly earnest about raising the animals for sale, and declares that he will make money at it. He is showing his faith in the venture by spending his money for supplies to start the farm.

The Spread of Pellagra Alarming.

Washington Dispatch. Pellagra, unknown in the United States seven years ago but now pronounced a greater menace than leprosy, which it closely resembles, has proven such a baffling problem to the public health service that Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo will probably ask the present Congress to appropriate a sum to establish a hospital for the study of this new menace.

This was announced by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Newton. He said there are now 600 cases in a single county of South Carolina, and if a research hospital is established it will probably be located in that part of the country.

Since the first cases of pellagra in this country were discovered in Alabama in 1917, there have been 50,000 persons stricken, 35 per cent of whom have died and many of whom have gone insane.

Though confined largely to the South, cases have been reported in 44 States and the District of Co-

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lumbia. In many sections of the country, Mr. Newton declared, the disease now exists in epidemic form and is menacing the life and health of the entire population. It affects chiefly the poorer agricultural classes, but does not spare the well-to-do.

How Long, O Lord!

During the holidays The Observer in a New York paper an appeal from a Northern school teacher for contributions to make glad the hearts of a lot of children "who have never known Christmas." This latest discovery of objects for Northern charity is located on "the ridges around Mount Airy," the abiding place of the desolate folk more commonly known as "Georgia Crackers." Mount Airy, be it known, is a well advertised resort on the Southern Railway and is in the heart of one of the most civilized sections of the benighted South. But this evangelist has uncovered conditions among the natives that are well calculated to create a shudder. "Perhaps you will realize their life a little," she writes, "if I could tell you that few among them have ever tasted candy, but they know well enough how to manipulate a quid of tobacco. Babies who have never seen a toy will drink deep of fire corn whiskey. Look inside one of these wretched cabins that house 15 or 20 persons, half naked children crawling on the floor dipping snuff, chewing tobacco, or sucking clay. From the rafters hang Revolutionary muskets; outside, the ugly hounds and the razorbacks, all lean and diseased, keep up a continual howling."

Then she follows up this rot with a heartrending appeal for contributions of any sort of trash or tinsel "to make these bleak souls happy." How long, O Lord! how long, is this sort of thing to continue? The intelligent portion of the North year since happily came into a better knowledge of conditions among the mountain people of the South. This soggy-minded variety of sentimentalism now arouses disgust where once it aroused resentment. Is there no way in which to stop it? Seems almost hopeless when we reflect that Ochs, in whose paper the "appeal" was made, is not only a Southern man and publisher of an influential Southern paper, but got his education in a mountain school. It is to be hoped the Christmas box sent to make the season a joyous one for these crawling Cracker babies, carried no superfluous supplies of whiskey, tobacco and snuff. They are well provided with such delightful commodities, you know—commodities absolutely necessary to the enjoyment of juvenile life in the South.—Charlotte Observer.

May Be Too Strong For Some of Them.

Durham Herald. When the Anti Saloon League tries to secure a law preventing the shipment of whiskey into the State we are afraid that it will find that some of its erstwhile friends have grown lukewarm.

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Particularly Pointed.

But what we don't understand is, where did those Asheville people have all that likker last summer during the press convention? They must have thought the Editors were a very religious people. Judge Carter seems to be going after the "higher up" in Asheville, but if any of them are sentenced to the roads, Governor Craig will perhaps take care of them with a pardon.—It's hard to separate some Democrats from their likker.

If the price of cotton, stocks and bonds keep coming down, and the price of everything we eat and wear going up higher, it will not be a great while before somebody is going to get hungry and cold.

And now the Democratic papers are admitting that by removing the tariff from beef that they have only helped the beef trust, and the consumers are no better off than they were before the great Democratic tariff bill went into effect. The price of beef is going still higher. —What are you going to do about it Woodrow?

We told you more than a year ago what was coming to pass during the reign of Woodrow, and we are still standing pat. The things that we wrote unto you about is not far off. A Democratic administration has never failed to bring on hard times, then why should it fail this time?—Just wait and see.

The Democrats promised to kill all the trusts in short order, and now comes the appalling news that after Secretary Daniels sent clear to Australia to get away from the beef trust, he found out after he had bought a big supply for the Navy that it all came through the much hated "beef trust."—Let the poke berry juice flow, Josephus.—Ex.

Can't Be "Intellectually Honest" in Congress.

In announcing that he would not be a candidate for re election, Congressman J. J. Whitacre, of the eighth Ohio district, declared that "no man who wants to be intellectually honest has any business in Congress."

"All I've done since I've been down in Washington," said Whitacre, "has been to sit around and try to look wise, and that's what any man has to do who isn't willing to barter his convictions for political expediency."

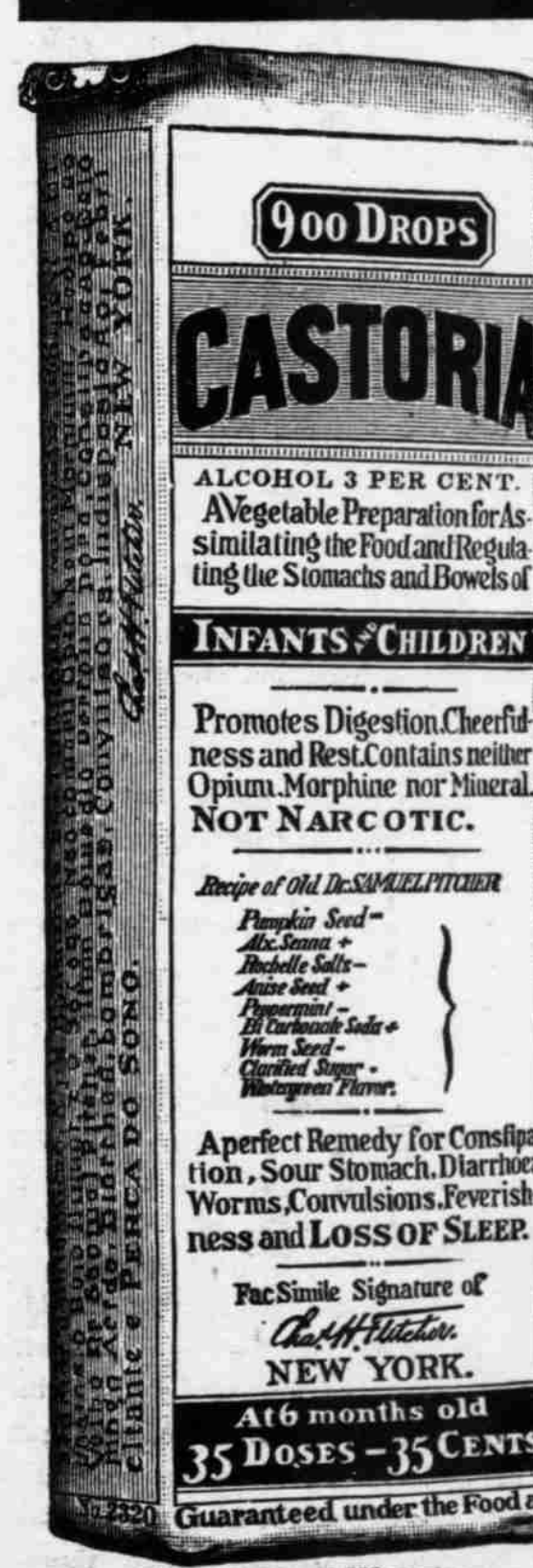
"Today I got a letter from a fraternal organization asking me to vote for the pending immigration bill. I voted against the bill once, but if I played the Washington game I would write my correspondent that I would carefully consider the matter, then I would keep bluffing until it came to a showdown. After I had voted against the bill I would hurry around and explain that matters arising at the last minute had made my act necessary."

"I can't stand that sort of business. I had thought there might be a chance for an honest, wide-awake, frank business man in Congress, but I was quickly disillusioned."

Whitacre is serving his second term. He was elected as a Democrat.

He is an unusual man who will sharpen a pencil at the gilt lettered end.

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