

Five Days Buried In a Well

Awful Experience Of a Canadian Well Digger

NOT often in the world's history has a man been buried in a well for more than four days, with great masses of earth about his head, and yet come out alive. Such, however, was the strange experience that befell a man named Joshua Sandford while at work in a well situated on a farm near the town of Paris, in the province of Ontario, Canada.

On Tuesday, June 24, 1902, Sandford and several other men were engaged in deepening a well on a farm. The well was bricked at the sides and was dry. Sandford was at the very bottom of the well. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the men above noticed that the sides of the well lower down were commencing to cave in. It is hardly necessary to say that they lost no time in getting to the surface of the ground. Arriving there, they at once commenced to haul up Sandford and would have succeeded in this but for the fact that when their comrade was only half way up the earth near the top also began to cave in, and with a rush a great mass of it descended upon their unfortunate companion, completely burying him.

It did not take long for a crowd to gather, all discussing the terrible fate which had befallen the young well sinker. Suddenly, however, a rapping was heard on an iron pipe that descended into the well, and those above

pipe, their only means of communication with the entombed man, but no response was heard, and poor Sandford's fate was now considered sealed. With heavy hearts the little band of men, who had worked so heroically to save a comrade's life, gathered up their tools and dispersed.

After all work had been abandoned a Mr. James Wheeler of Paris out of curiosity went to have a look at the well and while standing there fancied that he heard a sound as of tapping. Another gentleman who was standing near at once went down into the new excavation and reported that he had received a distinct response to his rapping. Without a moment's delay men were hurried to the spot, and the workers, though much fatigued by their previous long exertions, renewed their plucky struggle for a man's life. At 2 a. m. on Friday, the 27th, the third day of his imprisonment, the rescuers were able to communicate with Sandford again and ran iron pipes through the wall of earth to convey air to him. Sandford informed the men that he was ten feet below them, and they at once set to work to deepen the shaft.

Meanwhile willing hands, that eagerly volunteered for the perilous task, toiled on unflaggingly in the new shaft. When the shaft had been deepened to a depth of sixty feet and the tunnel



THE FRESH AIR REVIVED SANDFORD.

at once came to the conclusion that the falling earth had in some way formed an arch above Sandford, while the earth which had caved in lower down had filled up the well below him, thus preventing him from being crushed to death.

At the top of the well there was an opening in the pipe where four and five inch tubes joined, and through a crevice Dr. Patterson of Paris was able, with difficulty, to communicate with the entombed man below. Sandford was not able to reply in the same way, although for some time a certain amount of air reached him by means of this pipe, a supply augmented by pumping air down.

A system of signaling was soon arranged, in accordance with which Sandford would tap on the pipe a certain number of times in response to questions asked. In this way it was discovered that he was well, had some few feet of space around him and was prepared to hold out for a day, if such a length of time were necessary to effect his rescue.

The plan finally adopted was the digging of a new well or shaft about six feet from the old one, and this was accordingly sunk to a depth in the first place of about forty-three feet, the men working like Trojans. To reach Sandford it would of course be necessary to tunnel from the new well into the old one, and here a very formidable difficulty presented itself. To tunnel into the old well above Sandford might mean instant death to him, for in this way the superincumbent mass would be released. To tunnel below him would also give rise to great danger.

When the workers had reached the depth mentioned above, they were afraid that they were not yet low enough, but Sandford again and again affirmed that they were. Finally, after considerable consultation, it was decided to proceed with the tunneling, and carpenters set to work to erect supports in the new well so as to diminish the peril run by the rescue party. That this peril was a very real one was soon apparent. Suddenly a loud crash was heard, the timbers cracked and appeared to be giving way, and the men below were hastily drawn up to the surface. The cause of the disaster was soon explained. The north

cut through to the old well, the rescue party found they were too far down, and the tunnel had to be filled up and a new one cut higher up. All the tunnel work had to be cribbed with timber to prevent its caving in.

The hole that was now bored was found to be above Sandford, but the workers toiled on, and by a lower boring he was finally reached. Sandford was discovered lying on his side, very pale and muttering indistinctly. The fresh air that reached him caused him to revive somewhat, and after the administration of some hot water and milk by the physicians he rapidly gained strength.

"My body is free," he explained, "but my legs are caught. I can move them slightly, and they are not crushed, but simply gripped so tightly that they will not give an inch.

For twenty-four hours the men labored incessantly to release Sandford's legs. Having failed to succeed in what had seemed a simple task, it was finally decided that a new tunnel would have to be dug in order to get at the foot and clear away whatever held it.

Sandford on being consulted agreed to the plan of tunneling in two feet below him, immediately under the imprisoned leg. Over him they built an arch to provide against a possible caving in when the sand and bricks below should be removed. Around his body a rope was fastened and attached to a pulley on the other side of the crib-work, and above ground half a dozen men held this rope, prepared in case a fall of earth did occur to adopt the desperate remedy of attempting the prisoner's release by a vigorous pull.

A small opening was made in the side of the well, and every inch of it was protected. At length by the light of a portable electric lamp Sandford's trousers were seen. The foot itself was soon discovered wedged in between an iron pipe, the bricks of the well and a heavy board. In removing these obstructions Sandford slipped down, and it is said that not until then did he show alarm. He only descended a few inches, however, and after some stimulus had been administered the last brick was removed and the man was free. At 4:30 on Saturday afternoon, the 30th day of his entombment, Sandford was rescued.

THE GUSTODIAN THE INFORMER

[Original.]
While on a visit to the south I one day passed a plantation that had fallen into decay. The roof of the manor house had caved in, the window panes were broken, the fences down. Behind the house was a solitary hut. The only thing left of the former splendor of the place was the trees. A desire came over me to know something of this noble ruin. I walked up to the house and, seeing no one, went back to the hut, where I found a venerable negro sitting on a box before his cabin door smoking a cob pipe.

"Good morning, uncle."
"Mornin', sah."
"Are you the only person about the place?"
"Spec I am, sah, an' I've been de only pusson 'bout de place fo' fo' yea's."
I offered the old man a cigar, which he declined, preferring his pipe. Throwing myself on the grass, I waited for him to talk. As he did not, I made a remark by way of a starter.

"I suppose this was once a busy place."
"Reckon it was a busy place, sah. It belonged to Cunnel Peyton. He was Cunnel Peyton befo' de wah, though he didn't nebber command nothin' den an' General Peyton while it was a goin' on. He owned a hundred 'ousand niggers."
"You mean a thousand."
"Yes, 'bout dat. Dey all libed in de cabins 'long hyer."

"What has become of the cabins?"
"I burn 'em all up fo' firewood. Missy Dorothy Peyton was 'bout twenty yea's old when de wah kum on. Dat war de time when dis place war fine. All de Peyton fambly, five chillun, war growed up, fou' boys an' one girl. De flower ob de flock war Missy Dolly. De cunnel an' de boys went away to de wah, leavin' Missy Peyton an' Missy Dolly. Dere war three Pickerin' boys on a plantation ober dar, an' dey war all three in love with Missy Dolly. Dey all went to de wah, an' when dey lef' Missy Dolly war 'gaged to George Pickerin', de oldest.

"Well, de fus' Peyton killed war Howell Peyton, at Manassas. Nex' kum de cunnel, at Sharpsburg. Roger tuk de camp fever, kum home an' died dere in de house. He had no mo' 'n died befo' George Pickerin' war brought home to de Pickerin' house ober dah an' died. Missy Dolly nussed him. Dat war de fus' yea' ob de wah, an' one day, two yea's aftah Marse Tom Pickerin' kum marchin' up with he troops, lookin' so harnsome an' so lak he brudder George dat when he went away Missy Dolly done promised to marry him.

"After de time when de messenger rode up to tell dat de cunnel had been shot Missy Peyton done pine away, specially dat her favorite son, Howell, war taken, an' wen de news ob de battle of Gettysburg kum, an' dat Marse Roger had been shotted daid, Missy jes' done gib up an' died in de summer. Dis leabe Missy Dolly all 'lone. But, as luck wud hab it, Marse Donald, de las' ob de Peyton brudders, tuk sick an' kum home on leabe. 'Twas lucky, fo' Tom Pickerin' war blowed up in de mine at Petersburg, an' Missy Dolly was lef' a sort ob widder nudder time.

"Donald Pickerin' hung 'long an' died in de spring ob '65, at de season when de roses air bloomin' an' 'bout de time when de Confederacy stopped bloomin'. Ob all de fine people alive fou' yea's befo' on de two plantations only Missy Dolly an' Alan Pickerin' was lef'. Soon 's de south'n men gib up de job Marse Alan kum back an' fin' Missy Dolly libin' all 'lone hyer on dis plantation. Mos' ob de niggers had done gone. Dey warn't none ob 'em lef' 'cept me an' my fambly hyer in dis cabin. Marse Alan war de only one ob Miss Dolly's lovers lef', an' after awhile he done 'sanded her to marry him. Dey didn't mak no fuss 'bout de weddin', fo' dere warn't nobody to kum to it 'cept de ghosts.

"Dey tried mighty hard to stay on de plantation, but 'twarn't no use fo' Missy Dolly to try to lib whar she had been so happy befo' de wah, an' now not eben de niggers war lef'. So one day she says, 'Uncle Peter, me an' my husband a-goin' to lib in New Yo'k, an' we want you to stay hyer an' tek care ob de plantation.' De nex' day dey lef', an' it seemed 's if de ole place had drawed its las' brea'f-an' gone to sleep, lak putty nigh all de fambly in de buryin' groun' ober on de hillside dar.

"Missy Dolly didn't lib berry long; spec dere war too much noise an' fuss in de city fo' her delicate 'stion. She had some chillun. One ob 'em kum down hyer onct, but he war a city pusson an' didn't carry no weapons an' didn't look lak de fine gentlemen with long ha'r what used to ride 'bout on dis plantation. Marse Alan Pickerin' married nudder wife an' had mo' chillun, an' when he died dis place got all mixed up in de law, so nobody can't do nothin' at all 'bout it.

"My ole 'oman died a yea' ago, an' my chillun air all waken in odder places. I keep watch ober de ole home. It's mighty lonesome sometimes, an' when I can't stan' it no longer I jes' shet my eyes an' see de place swarin' with niggers, an' Cunnel Peyton bossin' 'em all, an' Missy Peyton takin' care ob de sick ones, an' de Peyton boys gallopin' 'bout on de houses, an' de Pickerin' boys all tryin' which 'ud git Missy Dolly. Den I reckon I soon git to heab-an' an' an' 'em all dar on nudder plantation jes' lak dis befo' de wah."

I feed the narrator liberally and left him, walking under the great trees which hung their branches over the manor house in a vain effort to protect it from time's ravages. As I passed out where the gate had been I looked back and saw the aged custodian still

[Original.]
In one of the South American republics, where revolutions are the rule rather than the exception, the president sat behind a mahogany desk. Before him stood a man with a hook nose, glittering black eyes and a stooping figure.

"Well," said the president, "tell me about this conspiracy."
"First, your excellency, I desire to come to some agreement with regard to my own treatment. I wish to be surprised with the rest, tried with the rest and executed with the rest."

"Executed?"
"Yes. I must go through all the forms or they will suspect I have betrayed them."

"I understand. Go on."
"The plan is to ask an interview with you in order to submit certain proposed reforms—reforms that are impracticable. From amicable discussion they will come to angry words, and then they will rush upon you and murder you."

The president winced. The plan was not unlike that by which he had removed his predecessor.

"Then?"
"Then Jose Burtado will be proclaimed president."
"Burtado?"
"Yes; Burtado."
"And what are you expecting to receive for this revelation?"

"I leave that to your excellency."
"Very well. I will take care of you."

A week later a deputation of citizens waited on the president to propose certain reforms. Among them was the spy. They were admitted to the presence of his excellency, who sat behind the very desk at which he had received the information of the intention of the conspirators. They began in a very respectful tone to urge their plans, and the president quietly showed them why they were impracticable, whereupon they pretended to be unconvinced and clamored for their acceptance. The din growing apace, the president touched a bell on his desk, and several doors communicating with the room opened, and in a second it was full of armed men.

The president had not stipulated with the informer for evidence. Might was right in the republic, and, being himself convinced of the guilt of the deputation, he ordered them out to be shot without even a pretense to a trial. But before the execution he directed that the informer be conducted to his presence.

"Your reward," he said, "will have to be paid to your heirs. Will you name them?"

"But, your excellency, why not pay it to me?"

"You especially stipulated that you were to be shot with the rest."

"But," pining, "this was to be merely a pretense."

"Then why did you not say so?"

"I supposed your excellency understood."

"Nothing is understood with an informer, a spy. Had I been obliged to grant your terms I doubt if I should have availed myself of your information."

"Have I not saved you from murder?"

"Yes, and for gain. The others acted partly for what they considered the welfare of the republic. Come; name the person or persons to whom the reward of your perfidy shall be paid."

"I have no heirs. I implore you—"

"Guard!" called the president, and the man was taken away.

At sunrise the next morning the conspirators were led out into the jail-yard and placed with their backs against a wall. They stood ten feet apart, and opposite each man was a soldier with a rifle. The signals were given to aim and to fire. A report came from every gun. Some of the conspirators stood as erect as before the fire; some swayed, but recovered themselves without fallin'—and one, the spy, fell on his face. He was carried away. Then the officer in command read a communication from the president, stating that they had been punished—punished with blank cartridges—and what they had endured without flinching showed them to be brave men. If they would hereafter support the republic under his administration, he would be glad; if not, they were welcome to seek homes in other lands.

Every one of those who had manfully stood the terrible test gave in his adherence to the existing government.

When the spy recovered from the shock of fright, he was conducted to the president.

"There," said the executive, pointing to a bag standing on his desk, "is \$10,000 in gold. Since you have not died you may appropriate it yourself. It is the reward of your treachery. If you are found within the limits of the republic tomorrow, a ball cartridge will finish your career."

The conspirators knew well that one of their number had given up their plot and rightly judged that he was the coward of their ring. When, therefore, they saw the spy fall after the mock execution, they decided that he was the Judas. From the moment they were at liberty they kept a watch on his movements, and when he started to leave the republic one of their number followed him.

The next day the chief of the conspiracy called upon the president and deposited on his desk a bag of gold.

"We respect your excellency," he said, "for keeping faith even with an informer, but since your magnanimous treatment of us we do not care to see you rebuffed. The man to whom you gave that bag will not need it. I have

THE MISSING FOWL.

An Experience With an Absent-minded English Artist.

Wills invited me to dinner one afternoon when I met him in the Strand. I accepted, reminding him that as he was absent-minded he had better make a note of the evening. As he had no paper in his pocket he wrote the date on his shirt cuff. When the appointed evening arrived I went to his studio. The door was opened by Wills, and I could see that he had forgotten all about the appointment. "Ah, old fellow," he exclaimed, "do not be too hard on me. The cuff went to the wash, and the date with it. But there is a fowl in the pot boiling here," continued Mr. Wills. "Just come in and wait a few minutes."

I had my misgivings, but walked inside and sat down upon the only chair not crowded with paint, brushes and palettes. After waiting for about twenty minutes, feeling deucedly hungry, I groaned. This had the effect of reminding Wills that I was present. He exclaimed in a dreamy voice, "The fowl must be boiled by this time," and coming forward he lifted the lid of the pot and peered inside. "It is very odd," he remarked, "but I cannot see the fowl. Extraordinary! No one has been here, so the bird cannot have been stolen."

Well, the long and short of it is that a week or two later I called again at the studio, noticed a peculiar odor and discovered the old fowl wrapped up in a piece of brown paper. "Ah!" said Wills, "now I know how it all happened. When the fowl was brought in there came a smart visitor—Lady G.—about sittings for her portrait. I must have thrown the fowl behind a canvas and forgotten all about it. But now, old fellow, do shut up!"—London Mail.

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