

BRITTLE BONES.

STRANGE PHYSICAL PHENOMENON OF A SAILOR.

Striking Fracture After Fracture The Bones of His Body Little More Than Dust Held Together by an Oily Fluid.

A New York letter to the Cincinnati Enquirer describes the extraordinary condition of John Hughes, a sailor undergoing treatment in the Charity Hospital on Blackwell's Island. The writer says: Hughes has had an eventful career, though he has only just begun to climb into the fifties, he has passed through enough variety of scenes, pleasures and hardships to make decent histories for a half dozen men on a New Bedford whaling ship, and has ever since trod the deck of a vessel of some sort. The particular portion of his busy life which may be said to throw some light upon his present disease was that spent upon a little island in the Southern Pacific Ocean. It was through no choice of his that he visited this island. It was all the work of one of those terrific cyclones that loiter around the Southern Pacific waiting for something to run against. It struck the ship on which Hughes was sailing as a double back-act hand-spring, Hughes was thrown into the life boat and set adrift in the fury of the storm. How long he was in the boat he has no knowledge, but he thinks it was several days, and the first that he remembers was finding himself upon a little beach with the sun pouring full upon his upturned face. His clothes were dry, showing that he had been on shore some time, and his emaciated form indicated that he had been days without food. He was much further inland than the boat. As soon as he collected his senses, he crawled to a sheltered spot in the woodland, which fortunately was near a spring. After getting water, then came the search for food. It was a dreary hunt, but finally Hughes found some birds of large size feeding upon a peculiar vegetable or plant having a light yellow flower, and concluded he could stand what the birds could. He ate freely of this plant, and soon there followed a pleasant sense of exhilaration or stimulation. The food was nourishing and he gained strength. He made a fire on the island, but save the half sunken timbers in the sand that marked the burial-place of many a good ship there was nothing to show the foot of a human being had ever trod the desolate place. He varied his vegetable diet by killing some of the birds. He built a little hut out of the trees and boughs and prepared to spend the rest of his days on the island.

He had hopes, as is natural to the follower of the sea, of being rescued some day. There was ever a chance that a vessel might be blown his way. In order that the steamer, if any passing ship might be attracted, he made his shirt every clear day to the top of a dead tree. Days, weeks and months passed, and never the sign of a sail. It was a monotonous existence, but it was finally broken by the appearance of a long black streak in the sky. The steamer, it was thought, was near, but would it come near the island? was the question that racked the mind of the castaway. It did, and the look-out's eye caught the waving skirt. The steamer was stopped, a boat put off to the shore, and Hughes, with delight, was taken aboard. The rescued man, after a few days, recovered from the shock of his ordeal, and worked his passage on the vessel, which proved to be an ocean tramp, to France. The day after the vessel got to France Hughes stumbled over a stool and broke the right leg. It is his right leg, and it should be strange that such a serious wound should have followed so slight a cause.

Hughes was taken to the Charity Hospital when the vessel got to this port. This was months ago. Both the tibia and fibula were broken in the leg found by Dr. Willets, the attending surgeon, to be fractured. After some preliminary treatment, the leg was done up in a plaster of Paris bandage. It was supposed that the usual result would follow, and that in a few weeks the patient would be able to hobble on crutches for a few days and then leave the hospital. At the end of six weeks the upper portion of the plaster bandage was cut away.

This gave the patient the liberty to move the leg, and it proved decidedly unfortunate. The foot and lower part of the leg being heavy, the patient, in getting out of bed, let his leg fall heavily, and it struck the edge of the bed in the middle of the thigh bone, which snapped as if it were a pipe-stem. This fracture was thought to be due to the weakened condition of the bone and muscles from inaction. The patient was so great that Hughes became delirious, and after his entire leg had been bandaged he threw his right arm around wildly, and fractured both the radius and ulna and the collar bone. These were put up in plaster. Soon after this the patient got relief from the position in which he had been lying, the weight on his left leg being righted quickly, and the shock broke the thigh bone near the knee.

The last fracture was of such an unusual nature that, taken in consideration with the others, it was thought to demonstrate some defect in the organic structure of the bones. Such a case had never been seen before. In experimenting by pressure upon the uninjured arm, the ulna was broken near the wrist. This led to a practical examination of the bone. An opening was made in the arm, and a piece of bone was taken out. It was found to be very fragile and crumbled like calcined bone. A chemical and microscopic examination showed that the disease was an extraordinary case of fragilitas ossium. The brittleness was caused by an undue proportion of earthy matter; and the quantity was so great in this case that the bone was, in some places, but little more than dust, held together by an oleaginous fluid. The bones of the entire body were found to be affected. In order to stiffen the spine and protect the ribs a chain shirt was put on the body. This consisted of a light-fitting network of wire, which was fitted to the body so that it was the same as if it was all incased in a solid bone.

Internal remedies were given to counteract the crumbling tendency of the bones and the removal of tissue from the body. A good rest was made in the arm, and at the end of two months an examination showed a perceptible hardening of the bones. Fortunately, the skull was not affected. The fractures united rapidly in the legs and arms, and the plaster was taken off at the expiration of three months.

In order that there might be no strain upon the bones, Dr. Willets constructed an ingenious piece of mechanism of steel bands. These were fitted tightly to the legs and arms lengthwise on both sides, with a movable attachment at the joints to admit of natural motion. The bands were very stiff, though elastic, and took

all the strain of the body from the bones. The patient could stand, and the harness sustained the weight, and with this relief there is a possibility that the bones may, with proper treatment, be restored to their normal condition. It is estimated that two years will be consumed in doing this, and it may be that the patient will never get well.

Hughes attributes his condition to eating the vegetable food on the island where he was cast ashore. He says that he noticed that the bones of the birds he caught crumbled in his fingers without being subjected to heat, and broke easily when twisted. Dr. Willets has no confidence in this idea, but thinks that the disease was caused by the repeated attacks of scurvy which Hughes had in his seafaring life. Scurvy is known to render the bones brittle in those who have it, and the name of the plant Hughes ate is not known.

A Hired Man's Romance

A dozen or so years ago a young man in Harrisburg was employed by a gentleman as man-of-all-work about the house. He was a young man of a fine and handsome shape, and he was intelligent. There was something in him above the menial, and, as subsequently transpired, all that he wanted was a chance, and he would go up higher. It happened that the gentleman's house was a pretty daughter (about twenty) and a well-to-do and gay, quite a society girl, but sensible for all that. Seeing her every day, it was the most natural thing in the world for the young fellow—the "hired man"—to fall in love with her, and one bright day he made his proposal to her. But the girl was not looking with favor on a hired man just then. She was shocked. She told her sire. After reproving the young fellow, the venerable parent fired him. But the young man had blood. He gathered together his earthly possessions and faced toward the West. He took twenty dollars and landed in one of the mining towns of Colorado. There he went to work as a prospector. Do you know what the life of a prospector means? It means hope deferred—it means continued disappointments—hard work, toiling and digging and hunting until death itself would be a welcome release.

The young man went through it all. He didn't miss a trick. Many a time he would lay right down and pass in his cheeks right then and there, but the sand in him wouldn't let him. He kept digging himself a tunnel, and one day, until one day he struck pay dirt, and all at once he found himself the possessor of great riches. Struck it fat, just like many another poor devil, in the last ditch. He sold out well, and then sat down to think. His first thoughts were of the Harrisburg girl who refused him. Ah, the old love was still there, brethren, still there. He resolved to try again. Gathering together a nice wallet full of boodle he hid him East, and at last landed in Harrisburg. The girl he loved was still there, but turning the corner of the old main street, he saw her, and things had not gone right. She was poor. The young fellow hunted her up. There was a scene that I hope you will not insist upon my describing, and last week there was a quiet wedding that did not get into the papers.—Harrisburg (Penn.) Telegraph.

A Ride Down a Plume.

A. G. Mason left the mills at 12 o'clock yesterday on a raft in the flume of a dangerous river. He expected to make the trip in three and a half hours, but met with several thrilling mishaps that delayed him until after dark and effectually cured him for a raft ride to Chico. The ride for the first fifteen miles was novel and grand—scenery as magnificent as any in the Sierra Nevada. But when the raft struck the deep canyons and mountain gorges, with the flume stretched along looking like a silvery thread from the bottom, the ride began to take on dangers, for the lumber that had been shipped in the morning was here met with, and the real trouble commenced. The deep water cut the V-box ran onto a board, upending the raft and throwing Bert high into the air. In falling he grasped a small board nailed to the flume and hung suspended fifty feet from the bottom of the canyon. Bert, having but one arm, found himself in a dangerous position. He tried to hold on to the board, but he was hanging by one hand. About twenty feet below him was a small platform between the joists, so, just as the board gave way, Bert swung out, let go his hold, and dropped. He struck the platform, but when he struck it he was sixty feet to the bottom of the canyon, striking on his shoulder and the side of his face. He was stunned for a moment, but when he came to, he hurried down the flume and caught the raft. When twelve miles from Chico he was again thrown, but this time he struck in the flume, with a narrow escape from drowning. His hat was lost and he was wet through. As soon as he got out Bert concluded that he did not want any more raft-riding, and walked the remaining two miles to town, arriving at 7:30 o'clock.—Chico (Cal.) Enterprise.

The Harvest Moon.

The harvest moon is the full moon which falls on or near September 21. Its peculiarity is that it rises more closely after sunset for a number of nights after the full than any other full moon in the year. This results in four or five successive nights being almost moonlit, and the opportunity thus given for evening work in harvesting has led to this full moon being distinguished by the name of the harvest moon. The difference between the moon's times of rising on successive nights averages about fifty minutes. The greatest difference occurs in the spring, when it may reach an hour and a half. The harvest moon may rise over half an hour late each night, while under the most favorable conditions the difference is only about ten minutes. The full moon following September likewise rises but a little later from night to night, and is called the hunter's moon. The moon's orbit makes the least angle with the horizon at the autumn equinox, and as it becomes, in advancing one day's motion along its orbit, less depressed below the horizon than at any time, it has but a little greater hour angle to travel over each succeeding night after sunset to bring it into view. Hence the full moon for so many successive evenings in the last of September.—Popular Science News.

Superstitious Steamboatmen.

Says an old deckhand on a steamboat: "There is one peculiar superstition among steamboatmen that does not lose any of its interest by age. Whenever a minister and a white horse happen to make the trip at the same time on a steamboat there is always an accident of some kind to follow. It may not be always to the steamboat, but it is certain to be to the boat or some of the passengers. This superstition is so strong among the deckhands that they will positively refuse to go on a boat which carries a minister and a white horse."—New York Tribune.

Dogs are said to kill \$5,000,000 worth of sheep annually in Texas.

A SNAKE DANCE.

A GROTESQUE CEREMONY OF ARIZONA INDIANS.

A Festival Celebrated Once Every Two Years—Indians Dancing With Whips and Serpents in Their Hands and Mouths.

A letter to the Apache County Critic from the Moqui villages of Arizona gives the following description of a snake dance:

This ceremony is celebrated only once every two years, and it takes sixteen days to prepare for it, the first eight days being observed by the high priests and leaders in getting together the various articles used in the dance, and in the preparation of the infusion which is drunk by those who are to take part, that the fangs of the serpents or even their bite may not prove injurious to any one. It is the preparation of this drink that is the profound secret of the order, and it is known to but four living beings at the same time.

The remaining eight days are devoted to bathing snakes and whips, and washing them, or, rather, "subduing their vicious habits," as the Moqui puts it. This washing is more of a shower-bath, and is accomplished by putting the snakes into large stone jars, and pouring the water over them. This, of course, chills the serpents—puts them into a semi-comatose condition that leaves them comparatively helpless. They are then taken out of the jars, rolled in sand until dry, and then replaced in the vessels, where, covered as they are with a tanned buckskin, neither light nor breeze can get at them, and they are quietness. Usually from a half to a third are fullgrown rattlesnakes, and the idea of the removal of the fangs is altogether erroneous.

The evening before the dance proper a preliminary one was held, but, as no snakes were handled, it was of no real importance. After singing a song of several verses, in the archaic, the members returned to their quarters. Next day, however, the programme was more elaborate. A large cotton-wool shade—erected upon the western edge of the dance-space, close to the line of the houses, which is struck before the hour of commencing the exercises, the snakes, inclosed in sacks of various sizes, were placed, with the mouths of the sacks securely tied, that some might escape. After the placing of the snakes in this manner, a large cotton-wool board, which was secured to the ground immediately in front of the doorway, in the shade, was brushed clean and sprinkled with meal mixed with corn pollen. This, I was told, was to dispel all evil influences from harming the dancers.

When this act of seeming devotion was finished, attention was drawn to the furthest part of the village, where arose mingled sounds of rattles, shells and other tinkling ornaments. This was the signal for the coming up from the streets and on to the arena, of the men who, dancing the hot water, would take into their hands and mouths serpents, with its little glistening black eyes, bearing vengeful spite in every sparkle and lightning flash of its tongue.

The participants were composed of two bodies of men, thirty-six of whom danced with snakes, and a smaller number who formed a chorus of singing men. These latter were the first to come upon the scene, and were dressed in brightly-colored embroidered kites, neckties, anklets, and with beautifully-tanned yellow foxskins hanging down behind the body; bearing small flat rattles in one hand, while confined in the grasp of the other was a stick, to which was fastened a couple of arkey feathers. This stick, they claim, carries the sacred protection for one's life, and lets the snakes' tutelary god know that none of his progeny will be injured or carried to remote lands. These men made four or five circuits of the small plaza, and then took a position to the west side of the cotton-wool board, and the center of their line. After they had arranged themselves properly, in a state of extraordinary exaltation, the snake-men came marching with tremendous energy, as though inspired to bound across the entire mesa at a single stride.

These dancing men, like their predecessors, made four circuits around the same rock, which stands near the center of the plaza, halting to face the chorus, where as on the day before a song was gone through with. The snake-men were formed into groups of three each, and as an individual member of the group went into the cotton-wool shade and extracted a snake from one of the bags, and, after putting it into his mouth and firmly fixing it there by the teeth, started on his round. His companion, with an arm around his neck, kept the tail of the snake in position, while with the right hand in which was carried a stick with two long feathers attached, he held the serpent away from becoming tangled in the hair of his friend.

The snake, after being carried around the circle, is thrown from the mouth, when the third member of the group gathers his snakeship up and carries him the balance of the dance, occasionally, however, giving the dancing men some to hold, which they do in a rather modest manner. How many times the circuit was made or how many snakes were on hand would be hard to say, but serpents were plenty, and seemed to be in excellent condition, to judge from the manner in which they resisted capture after having been dropped from the mouth, but there were at least one hundred and fifty.

At the close of the dance the snakes were all gathered in a heap at the foot of the snake rock; meal was thrown over them, and then began a scramble among the snake men to get double handfuls, with which they ran off at the top of their speed, carrying their burdens down into the valley, where the snakes were turned loose and allowed to find places of security beneath rocks and in holes. That the performers are thoroughly doctored or medicated prior to the commencement of the ceremonies there can be no doubt. The eyes and the ecstatic bearing of the bodies attracts attention at once; there is a peculiar luster in the orb, and an abnormal elasticity in the movement of the body.

The reaction after the dance is remarkable, and while no serious or lasting effects follow, still they are left in a very weak state, requiring many hours of sleep to fully restore them to their normal condition. The wives, mothers and sisters of those who take part in the ceremonies carry great bowls of cooked food to the estufas, where the men, after first washing in a liquor prepared by the Chiefs, partake of the food, and thus ends the festival.

A North Branch (Mich.) hotel dog takes a bell in his mouth each morning and rings at every door along the hall, and, failing to get a response, bangs the bell against the door until he does get it.

General Grant's Physician.

Rumors have been current for some time that Dr. John H. Douglas, who was the physician in constant attendance on General Grant during the illness of the latter, had lost his practice, his health and his fortune. For the purpose of ascertaining the reasons for these statements a reporter of the New York Herald had a conversation with the Doctor at his residence. He said:

"The published statements with regard to me in some of the newspapers convey a wrong impression. I am not in pecuniary difficulty, neither have I any complaint to make of the Grant family. 'What is true is this. My health is very much impaired and my practice has suffered from my constant attendance upon General Grant. I am much better in health than I was, but I am not able to attend to the heavier duties of my profession. Those are now taken by my partner. What I need is more rest to enable me to recuperate, and I am not peculiarly in a position to get as much rest as I wish to have."

"With regard to the money compensation for my professional attendance upon General Grant, made to me by his family, I have received all I asked for. It is well known to those who had the opportunity of acquaintance with me during the illness of the General that I did not devote myself to him night and day in the expectation that I should receive an adequate pecuniary reward. What I did in that respect was done out of admiration and love for the General."

"In compliance with the urgent requests of the family on two occasions I rendered a bill for my services. These two amounts, which I should have received had been paid, and also \$5,000 which Mrs. Grant sent me, informing me that it had been designated by the General to be given to me. This \$12,000 is what I have received for nine months' medical services. It is more than I asked for. I did not know that General Grant had directed that anything beyond my bill should be paid to me until Mrs. Grant informed me. I, therefore, can be readily seen that I have no complaint to make in regard to my remuneration."

A Great Glacier in Alaska.

Ellet P. Sherrerd, describing a trip to Alaska, says in the New York Tribune: "The greatest natural wonder of this trip is Muir Glacier, in Glacier Bay. This glacier is about sixty miles long, and five miles from the bay it is about twenty-five miles wide. In its course it is fed by two principal and eleven lesser glaciers. These smaller glaciers have an inexorable law through a gate of mountains only two miles wide, piling and jamming itself up into turrets and pinnacles from three hundred to a thousand feet high, grinding the mountains till they have yielded it a sand beach of fine ice, which is then carried to the mountains from 2,500 to 4,000 feet high; Mount Grillon, ten miles away, is 16,000 feet, and Mount Fairweather, distant twenty-five miles, is 15,000. At its projection into the sea the glacier travels at the rate of forty feet a day, avalanching into the bay, and the sound of the thunder and earthquake. These retain the splendid blue tints of the parent glacier, when floating around us in great masses, some of them four hundred feet square and standing from fifty to one hundred feet out of the water. The all of these icebergs look like a boat like a storm, and we counted twenty-six of them at one time. But the steamer fearlessly lies to within six hundred feet of the place of metamorphosis from glacier to iceberg, her soundings with her longest line showing no bottom at 105 fathoms.

When the glacier is broken from the shore, the icebergs it plunges almost out of sight in the sea, then rises to its full height, as if seeking to regain its place, and again sinks to rise again and again till it finally finds its equilibrium and is carried away by the wind or tide, or both.

Curious Relics of a Prehistoric Age.

At the White Plains Saltworks on the line of the Central Pacific Railroad, beyond Wadsworth, in sinking large pits or wells many fish, perfectly preserved, have been found in the strata of rock salt cut through. The salt fish occupies what was the position of the fish in the lake. The fish found are of the pike or pickerel species, and from twelve to sixteen inches in length. No such fish are now seen in any of our Nevada lakes. The specimens are not petrified, but are preserved in perfect form, flesh and all, and the fish is found imbedded in cakes of ice. The saltworks are located near the centre of a basin in which was once a lake thirty miles long, by from twelve to fifteen miles in width and over 300 feet deep in places, as is shown by the ancient water lines on the bordering hills. The fish was imbedded in the layers of rock salt are doubtless thousands of years old. After being exposed to the sun and air for a day or two they become as hard as wood. At the time Jason Baldwin, now watchman at the Osblston shaft in this city, was Superintendent of the salt works, he found great numbers of these fish. In a pit eight feet square and about sixteen feet deep dozens of them were found, there being sometimes five or six in a bunch. It was found that they could even be eaten, but they were not used for food, and he was not allowed to sink them in fresh water for two or three days before attempting to cook them.—Virginia (Nec.) Enterprise.

Miserly.

The avicious person's boast of his humble beginnings never awakes admiration on the part of others. It was in a farmer who watched over several years the effects of surface application of manure became convinced that a load of quite raw, unfermented manure had quite as much effect as a load of manure that had been condensed and shrunken by fermentation. If, then, farmers will have informed of the favorable results of this course were plainly visible in the corn, and that on those parts of the fields where manure was spread earliest in winter the corn was best, the growth diminishing as the time of spreading neared the time of plowing. A German farmer who watched over several years the effects of surface application of manure became convinced that a load of quite raw, unfermented manure had quite as much effect as a load of manure that had been condensed and shrunken by fermentation. 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