

NOW AND THEN

(Continued from page one)

At one o'clock on Monday, three days after the mishap, his boat had drifted up on Howard's Reef, within four miles of Ocracoke village. Came by a fisherman in a sailboat, one who was frightened at this strange sight. He got Capt. Quiddle aboard. This Ocracoke fisherman was busy with his sails, so Capt. Quiddle steered the boat in. When he got to the landing at Ocracoke he fainted away. They cut his leather boots from his feet, revived him with stimulant, sent him home next day in fair shape. Once home he succumbed to the reaction, and was crippled for weeks before he fully recovered from his dreadful experience.

Nearly two months later, on March 22nd, they found the body of Filmore Gaskill. It had drifted to the northward, and was at Gull Shoals, many miles away, the body was identified only by an oyster license in his pocket. He was buried at Hatteras on March 24. He was a brother of Tom and Joe Gaskill of Wanchese. The old flat-boat belonged to A. J. Stowe & Brother, fishermen and merchants of Hatteras.

And so it is with many a man on Hatteras. Time after time great adventures have befallen them, and in many an instance one may simply review his past and find many another adventure fantastic or thrilling, but at any rate fully as amazing, and for above the commonplace things of today.

Death at Hatteras

Somehow Uncle Hiram Austin

81 in January, knew he was going to die. Those old men who have seen the fulfillment of all their hopes, the completion of all their tasks, their children in manhood's full estate and surrounded by their own households, have no great regrets, and no worldly dreams to pursue them on. His own helpmeet had been gone for nearly 20 years. And he, who had fought many a bitter battle with the sea, who had wrestled his meat and his bread from the briny deep, and helped to save many a life in the old days in the Coast Guard, knew as young men cannot ever know, that the gentle road to the end of the journey, misty with sustaining hope and faith holds greater lure than anything of worldly flavor.

At 81 he had disposed of his belongings by dividing them among his children. Before the end of the year he had arranged with a neighbor to build him a coffin quite to his own liking. Occasionally he would go to the workshop where this completed product remained, to admire it reverently, appreciatively and affectionately.

With a sense as uncanny as that by which an unlettered but experienced seaman predicts the approach of a distant storm, he had predicted the early end of his days. A few weeks before, he had taken his beloved old fiddle, the last reminder of the worldliness to which he thrived in earlier days, and breaking the priceless treasure into bits had buried it deep in the sands of Hatteras, back of the home he lived in.

His remaining days were devoted to tending the garden, which was his pride and joy. With great reverence he would call in his neighbors to see his garden, and

patiently discuss the ages of the various rows of vegetables.

And then a few days ago he took sick. Surrounded by faithful children, his comforts were well cared for. He said he was prepared in mind and soul for the final summons. He sent for his oldest neighbors and friends of the village and chatted with them about the neighborhood news and told them of his new coffin. In fact he recommended the builder, Ivy Austin, and Capt. Homer Styron was impressed. He says he is going to have his built too, because in keeping with ancient custom on the coast, he has had some fine seasoned lumber put aside for many years for this purpose.

Uncle Hiram predicted about the time he would die. He had seen nearly all his neighbors. All his five, fine upstanding children and his grandchildren were gathered about him. At all hours they would come to minister to his wants. Son Crawford, keeper of the lighthouse at Ocracoke, dropped in shortly before his death: "How is the fishing today?" the Old Man asked.

"Not so good Pop. Joe's crew went out all day and only got five dollars to the boat."

"Too bad; too bad," the old man said meditatively.

When the blackness of the night had faded out, and gold and rosy tints came down the beach from the rising sun and gilded every hill and softened the harshness of the dying oaks that fringe the shore, the old man sipped a glass of orange juice, slowly put the empty glass aside with steady hand, leaned back with a comfortable sigh and went to sleep forever.

BLUEBERRIES

Ordinarily, You Don't Associate the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company With the Cultivation of Blueberries, But That's Exactly What's Happening in Dare County

By WM. KEITH SAUNDERS

Did you know that the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company is operating a blueberry farm in North Carolina, and that this farm is one of the pet projects of this titan of the insurance world? No? Well, here's the story of that blueberry farm.

About 25 years ago there was a gigantic timber and lumber concern at Elizabeth City which operated under the name of the Dare Lumber Company. This company's vast timber holdings included a tract of from 40,000 to 50,000 acres of swampy lowland in Dare and Hyde counties, most of which was in the vicinity of Stumpy Point and East Lake.

How it Came About

When the Dare Lumber Company failed, two speculators organized a stock company and bought that land. Then, through a series of financial manipulations they swapped most of their stock for a controlling interest in an insurance company. The insurance company became heavily involved and the Metropolitan took it over. And among the assets of the company were those bonds, which were secured only by some 40,000 acres of virtually worthless swampland, from which practically all the marketable timber had been cut or destroyed by fire.

So the Metropolitan found itself with something of a white elephant on its hands. But the Metropolitan is a big company, with plenty of brains and money behind it, so it hadn't had this white elephant in its possession for many years before it decided to try to change the color of the animal.

About eight years ago, Mr. Frank Ewing, assistant general counsel of the Metropolitan in charge of real estate, paid a visit to the Stumpy Point section. As timberland, the company's tract was almost worthless; for purposes of agriculture it was no good at all. So Mr. Ewing began to worry. He had over 40,000 acres of land which his company was anxious to get rid of, but if people couldn't cut timber from it, raise crops on it or build homes on it, he would have a mighty slim chance of selling it. The problem was to discover some profitable use to which this land could be put, so that people could be persuaded to buy it.

Struck With an Idea In rambling over the property, Mr. Ewing ran across a good many large "high bush" huckleberries growing wild. He sampled them and found that they were very sweet and tasty. Then an idea struck him. Why not grow blueberries on the company's lowland? The blueberry had just come on the market at that time and the berries were much in demand and commanded a fancy price. Mr. Ewing

went to work on the idea at once. He sold his company on the idea of establishing a blueberry experiment project near Stumpy Point, which the company did in 1931.

Today the project embraces some 5,000 blueberry bushes covering from 10 to 15 acres of land, and additional young plants are being set out every year. The berries are large and luscious, and, best of all, they are seedless. Thus they command a good price on the New York market, the price ranging from a minimum of 56 cents a quart to a maximum of 75 cents a quart. And when you consider the fact that the yield per acre is approximately 1,000 quarts, it is simple enough to figure out that an acre of blueberries will, on an average, bring in around \$650 in cash. Which is nothing short of astounding in comparison with the average gross cash return from an acre planted in tobacco, cotton, peanuts, snap beans or almost anything else you might care to name.

The cultivation of blueberries is fairly easy. The main essentials are that you have the right sort of cuttings or young plants to begin with, and that the land on which you plant them is suitable for growing blueberries. Fortunately, all land is not suitable, else farmers all over the country would grow them and the price would tumble to 15 cents a quart. As a matter of fact, there are only a few places in this country that have soil and climate in which blueberries will grow and thrive—and the Stumpy Point section is one of those places.

The Metropolitan is well pleased with its blueberry experiment to date, even though it has invested a sum of money said to run into six digits. The farm is under the supervision of Capt. Ed Hancock of Elizabeth City, who has made an extensive study of blueberry culture and spent some time at one of the country's foremost bogs in New Jersey learning something about the growing of these delicious berries.

As soon as the Metropolitan is thoroughly satisfied with the results of its experiment and has a set of impressive figures dealing with the cost of production of blueberries in the Stumpy Point area, the company will probably launch a campaign to interest various people in buying acreage from its large holdings for the purpose of cultivating the berries. Or it is just possible that the Metropolitan will build houses on a portion of its land and settle a regular colony of blueberry growers there.

Of one thing you can be certain. The Metropolitan is not going to leave any stone unturned in its efforts to make its 40,000 acres of bogs and cut-over woodland worth something.

His Attraction Judge—But, madam, how could you marry a man you knew to be a burgler? Witness—Oh, your honor, he was so quiet in the house.

Penalty My dear, what a lovely coat! It must have cost a fortune. No. Just a single kiss. That you gave your husband? No, that he gave my maid.

WILL YOU SMILE?

Profane Broadcast Your son has taken up golfing. Yes, sowing his wild oats.

The Martyr Yes, said the bankrupt, I lost my fortune reaching for an ideal. How noble! And what was the ideal. A larger fortune than I had.

Steadfast Sam The diary which Pepys penned Pursued its course for years on end; How different from the normal man, Who seldom keeps one after Jan.

In Conference C. T. writes: "In an office recently I asked one of the filing girls who the old gentleman was who was muttering to himself." She replied, "That's the silent partner of the firm, he's in conference."

Unselfish or Forehanded Customer—I want to buy three lawn mowers. Dealer—You must have a large place. Customer—No—but I have two neighbors.

Better Chance Lawyer—I suppose you would like to be tried by a jury of your peers. Bootlegger—No; of my patrons.

Envious Isn't the radio a wonderful thing? Marvelous! My wife listens to it.

On the (Permanent) Wave Mother (severely)—Myra, did I see that young man stroking your hair on the piazza last night? Daughter—It's a mere habit with him, mother. He used to stroke on the varsity eight.

A Careful Girl You must have had chances to get married. Oh, plenty, but you see I'm not taking any chances.

Heard on an English Court Counsel—Was the plaintiff expensively garbed? Affable Witness—She was hindered. 'Er garbage must 'ave cost a small fortune.

But She Got a Ticket Fair Speeder (chased by motorcycle cop)—Officer, there's a man following me. Traffic Officer—Don't worry, lady, you have the law behind you.

GLEANED THOUGHTS IN RHYME

You say "I think" ten times a day, Or fifteen times, or twenty And even more. Well, anyway You sure repeat it plenty. But pause and ponder half a wink And start your brain cells clicking; "I think" you say, but do you think, Or only think you're thinking?

How often is the think you've thought Out of yourself created And not a dictum you've been taught And simply imitated? Into a reverie you sink And like an owl you're blinking, But do you actually think, Or only think you're thinking?

"I think" you say—and ladle out Some rusty old opinion That probably was known about In Pharaoh's dominion. Do new ideas ever slink Into your cranium's thinking? I wonder—do you really think Or only think you're thinking?

Traditions, customs, fill your head, And some of them have long been dead, They fester there and hurt you. Son, chuck that clutter in the drink. Wake up—don't sit there blinking! Wake up! And then perhaps you'll think And not just think you're thinking. —Berton Braley.

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST FARMS UNDER WATER

MATTAMUSKEET LAKE (Baltimore Sun)

One of the largest farms in the world now lies at the bottom of a lake in eastern North Carolina. Some fifteen years ago Mattamuskeet, in Hyde County, largest lake in the State was drained in an effort to reclaim the 600 acres of rich farm land in lake bed. A complete settlement was established—a twenty-room hotel, houses, barns, ways, bridges. A "New Holland" rose beneath the level of the lake.

The largest pumping station in the world was built to pump water out of the lake into the Pamlico Sound. Large crops of soil produced bumper harvests total of \$17,000,000 was spent in prodigious effort to reclaim submerged land. Scientists, neers, soil experts all cooperated in the attempt.

Water Overtakes Pumping But the sea was not to be easily shunted off. The great pumping system capable of pumping a million and a quarter gallons of water a minute proved unable to the task of keeping out the Water seeped in and covered crops a foot deep. Mud and collected over everything. Water stood in the lobby of the Mattamuskeet Hotel. Homes and farms were slowly inundated: Man proved no equal to the remorseless sea.

Today Lake Mattamuskeet reclaimed its own. The "New Holland" that was born of a man's dream is no more. Not a remains of the vast attempt to wrest the rich farm-lands from nature's grasp except a few desolate highways winding disconsolately down into the lake.

Lake Mattamuskeet is now Federal migratory wild fowl refuge—the home of thousands of and wild geese—and is stocked with an overabundant supply bass and other fish. It is practically unexcelled as a hunting and fishing ground.

THE ANSWERS

- 1. In the U. S. about \$5,500,000. 2. About 7,000,000. 3. No; often they hatch early and are destroyed. 4. About one-third. 5. Not yet. 6. Many observers think so. 7. Yes. 8. One estimate: 7,500,000 in 5 years. 9. As a general rule, no. 10. About 300,000.

The sulphur-bottom whale been known to reach 100 feet length and 150 tons in weight.

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