

# The Bloomfield Times

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AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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40 Cts. for 3 months.

Vol. VI.

New Bloomfield, Pa., Tuesday, February 27, 1872.

No. 9.

## The Bloomfield Times.

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING, BY  
**FRANK MORTIMER & CO.,**  
At New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa.

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### Off in the Stilly Night.

BY TOM MOORE.

Off in the stilly night  
'Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Fond Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me;  
The smiles, the tears  
Of boyhood's years,  
The words of love then spoken;  
The eyes that shone,  
Now dimmed and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken!  
Thus in the stilly night  
'Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Sad Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

When I remember all  
The friends so linked together,  
I've seen around me fall  
Like leaves in wintry weather,  
I feel like one  
Who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled,  
Whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed!  
Thus in the stilly night  
'Ere slumber's chain has bound me,  
Sad Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.

### PERCIVAL'S ADVENTURES.

A TRUE STORY.

**I**N the month of October, 1866, Mr. Edward Percival set sail from New York in the good ship *Speedwell*, bound for Calcutta. Young Percival was only a passenger. His father was a wealthy New York merchant, engaged in the shipping business, and the *Speedwell* was one of his vessels.

Edward Percival's visit to the East Indies was entirely a business one, and he expected to return to his native country in a year at the furthest. His mother was very much opposed to his undertaking the voyage, for he was an only son, and she loved him as only a mother can love; but Mr. Percival, senior, overruled her objections, by assuring her that there was no danger, and that if his son did not undertake the voyage, it would be a serious pecuniary loss to the family.

Edward's position on board was a very agreeable one; as son of the owner, he was treated with great politeness and consideration by the captain and mate, everything being done to make him comfortable as possible.

Everything seemed to conspire to render his voyage an agreeable one, and after a comparatively speaking short passage, the ship entered the Bay of Bengal. Here, however, a change took place, the wind became contrary, and storms arose. The *Speedwell* was a stout ship, and weathered these storms without injury. The only misfortune that happened them was to run short of water. The crew was put on allowance, but the winds remaining contrary, the captain gave it as his opinion that they had better make for some of the islands studding the bay, and obtain a supply of this prime necessity. The other officers of the ship agreed with this advice, and it was determined to alter the course of the vessel, and make for the nearest islands.

The captain took an observation, and found that they were five degrees north latitude, and eighty-five degrees east longitude. On marking their place on the chart, they discovered they were about an equal distance from Ceylon and the Nicobar Islands. The wind, however, was more favorable to make the latter than the former, and to the Nicobar Islands they determined to steer.

On the day that they came to this decision, Mr. Edward Percival and captain Ingraham stood on the deck together.

"Captain," said Edward, "can you tell me why so many vessels are lost in the Bay of Bengal? The navigation is not dangerous, and yet we continually see this announcement in the marine news of newspapers."

"I wish I could answer the question, Mr. Percival," replied the captain; "it is one of the greatest mysteries of modern times—the number of vessels that are lost in this bay is enormous, and strange to say that there is not the slightest trace ever found of the missing ships. They enter the Bay and then they are heard of no more."

"It is strange indeed," said Edward, in a musing tone; "one would suppose that if they were shipwrecked by storms or squalls, some portion of the wrecks would be discovered, but I understand you to say that nothing of this kind is ever found?"

"Nothing. They disappear as completely as if they sunk to the bottom of the sea."

The conversation was carried on some little time longer, but the only conclusion that could be arrived at was, that it was a mystery, the solution of which had not yet been discovered. Little did Edward Percival imagine, at the time he held this interview, that he it was who was destined to discover the key to the enigma.

This conversation states a positive fact. Many a vessel has been known to have entered the bay, which has never made her appearance at the port for which she cleared. Insurances for such vessels have been duly paid, and relatives have mourned those who formed the crews, as "lost at sea," and the fate of both vessel and crew remained a mystery, previous to 1867.

In a day or two the *Speedwell* sighted the Nicobar Islands, a group which lie south-east of the Andaman Isles, between the Andamans and Sumatra. The same day the vessel put into Nangkawii, a harbor in the island of Trinkat, one of the Nicobar group.

Canoes filled with natives immediately surrounded the *Speedwell*, and the captain made known what he required. Measures were at once taken to get a supply of water; in the meantime a brisk trade was instituted between the natives and crew. They brought coconuts, poultry and vegetables, to exchange against cloth, knives, tobacco, and spirits, and they conducted themselves with the utmost propriety.

Edward Percival was a keen sportsman, and had brought with him from home several rifles and plenty of ammunition, intending to do some shooting in the jungles of India. As the *Speedwell* would be delayed some three or four days, he told the captain that he would like to land in the island for a day or two's shooting. The captain tried to persuade him against such a proceeding, stating that they knew nothing whatever of these natives, and doubted whether it would be safe. The inhabitants of these islands belong to the Malay race, and it is well known that such people are for the most part treacherous.

Edward, however, pointed to the exemplary manner in which the natives who had visited the ship were conducting themselves, and reiterated his intention. The captain yielded, and three of the crew were ordered to accompany him, which they did with the greatest alacrity; it being a pleasing change from the monotony of life on board ship.

Edward's intention was communicated to Achceup, the chief of the island, through one of the natives who could speak English, and he returned on board with a cordial invitation from Achceup to visit the shore, promising him some splendid sport.

A boat was launched, and young Percival and his companions proceeded to the village, which was pleasantly situated, extending along the shores of the bay, the houses large, and built on piles, with coconuts and palm-trees, and thick jungle in the rear. On the beach was a large number of war canoes.

On landing, Edward was taken first to the house of the chief, Achceup. The young American, on seeing this person, began to repent of his course on coming ashore, for a more hideous or savage-looking man he had never seen. He was a rough, rude specimen of a brute, with elephantiasis on both legs and feet. He received Edward, however, politely, and there was nothing in his manner that indicated treachery.

Achceup deputed two of the natives to accompany Edward and his party on their hunting expedition. There was one circumstance that gave the young American

great uneasiness, and that was the fact that the chief's hut contained a quantity of ship's furniture and ship's belongings. Achceup noticed Edward's eyes resting on these things, and informed him, through the interpreter, that they came from off a deserted vessel that had been stranded on the coast.

The explanation satisfied young Percival, and he and his party started for the jungle. He soon became separated from his companions, and supposed that, tired with their sport, they had returned to the village.

Game abounded, and Edward Percival toward the middle of the day, began to get tired. He explained to the two natives his desire to return to the ship. They showed by signs that they understood him, and started, as he supposed, in the direction of the coast.

By-and-by they left the jungle, and entered a kind of clearing, which was solely planted with immense trees, the tops of which were only green, the lower branches being as destitute of verdure as if bared by the severest winter weather.

They had scarcely set foot in this clearing when, to Edward's extreme surprise, he saw the natives scramble like cats up the trunk of one of the trees. On glancing around to find some cause for this gymnastic proceeding, the young American was suddenly confronted by an immense black bear, who with a terrific roar, sprang on the young man.

Edward had not time to use his rifle, but throwing it on the ground, he drew his hunting knife, and, grasping the monster by the throat and as he tried to hug him, he drove it up to the hilt in his flank. He must have reached the bear's heart, for it immediately fell backward dead.

Young Percival was naturally much elated with his achievement, and bent his steps toward the village, in company with the natives, in the best possible spirits.

He was soon, however, destined to realize that he had greater dangers to face than a wild beast, for he had scarcely set his foot in the village, when he was seized by a party of natives and conveyed to a hut, a prisoner, where he found his three companions also in custody.

Their prison consisted of a large room in Achceup's house, overlooking a kind of square, which was used for public ceremonies. A guard was placed over them, and they were left to guess the fate in reserve for them.

Sailors are not the most refined men in the world, nor is their sense of justice specially acute. Of course, we refer to the lowest class, for no finer set of men, than the educated and liberal, open hearted sailor can be found. They had not been alone five minutes, when the three men who had accompanied Edward Percival with such willingness, attacked him as being the cause of their misfortune. Had it not been for his desire "to go a-shootin'" they'd a bin safe aboard ship this blessed minute, in stead of bein' in the clutches of these savages."

The young American defended himself as well as he could, trying to show them how unjustly they accused him; but it was of no use, nothing could persuade them that they were not very ill used.

Two days passed away without any incident occurring, when one morning several natives entered, and taking one of the men, they led him into the square. His companions ran to the opening serving for windows, curious to know what they were going to do with him. Their doubts were soon at rest, for he was killed before their eyes. We must draw a veil over the after proceedings of the savages, as they are too horrible to be told.

All doubt as to the fate reserved for them was at an end for the poor captives, for they felt assured that, sooner or later, they would share the same fate.

Two days later, another of the sailors was led out, and the same scene re-enacted, the horrible orgies being conducted as before under their very eyes.

Edward Percival gave up all hope after this. Here, then was the explanation of "Lost in the Bay of Bengal." The Nicobar Islands were nests of assassins and pirates, and all vessels visiting them were destroyed and the crews murdered.

This next day ample and horrible proof of this was made manifest to Edward and his surviving comrade, for on glancing through the opening into the square, they saw Captain Ingraham's body and those of some of the crew, subjected to the same hellish treatment they had seen their two comrades suffer.

The orgies attendant on disposing of the crew of the *Speedwell*, seemed to satisfy

the savages for a time, for two weeks elapsed before any thing further was done. At last, one morning, the third and last sailor was fetched away. Percival would not look at these horrors any more, but retired to the furthest end of the apartment.

His turn would come next. It was dreadful to die thus, in the morning of his life, but there was no hope for him. He tried to resign himself to his fate; when suddenly the magic word "escape" was whispered in his ear.

It was strange; but until that moment, the idea of effecting his escape never entered his mind. He had in fact, been so stunned by the horror of his situation, that a kind of torpor had taken possession of him. Now, however, when his life could be counted by minutes, he awakened from his stupor, and determined, at all events, to make the attempt. He could die but once and one way was as good as the other.

It was true, when he reflected on the matter, he could not see how an escape from the clutches of the savages would help him. He could only take to the jungle, where he would, in all probability, die from hunger or fall a prey to wild beasts; but anything was better than the fate in reserve for him.

He quickly made up his mind as to his course of proceeding. His guard consisted of four men, armed with ship's cutlasses, doubtless stolen from some of the unfortunate vessels which fell into their clutches. At night, three of these guards would sleep, while the fourth kept watch.

The night following the immolation of the last of his comrades, when three of his guard were asleep, he suddenly seized the only sentinel awake, unawares. He snatched the cutlass from his grasp, and with one blow cleft his skull in twain, and then, leaping over the bodies of the others, he made for the jungle before they had time even to rise to their feet.

It was quite dark, but he knew in which direction the jungle lay, and the desperate crisis of his fate seemed to give him wings, for he flew rather than ran to the friendly bush.

He reached it in safety, and after much exploration, he found a species of cave, in which he was secure from the attacks of wild beasts.

Edward Percival must ultimately have died of hunger, for he had no means to obtain food, and the cocoa-nut trees were in too exposed a situation for him to procure their fruit; but the very next day his ears were gladdened by the sound of a cannon shot in the direction of the bay. He ventured from his hiding-place, and found the village deserted of its inhabitants. His eyes were further gladdened by the sight of a considerable body of seamen and mariners, under the command of Captains Bedningfield and Edye, of H. M. ships, the *Wasp* and *Satellite*.

It seems that information had reached Penang of the fact that vessels, stopping at the Nicobar Islands, were pillaged and the crews murdered; and the two British war steamers were sent to inquire into the matter.

Edward Percival told his story, and it was determined to take swift vengeance on the wretches. The invaders marched into the villages and found fearful confirmation of all previous suspicions as to the character and habits of the Nicobarians. In the houses were large quantities of ship's gear, sailors' chests, teel-boxes, sofas, cushions, fittings of ships, nautical instruments, and arms.

The village was then set on fire and burned, together with the war-canoes on the beach. The ships then visited other islands of the group, and everywhere found confirmation of the same horrible story. In some of the houses they found books, with the owners names written in them. In the report afterwards made by the captains of this expedition, they gave a long list of these books, together with the thousands of other articles discovered. It was found that a system must have been carried on for many years—a system of deliberate piracy—by which ships having been inveigled into harbors of the island, had been seized, the men murdered, the women reserved for a worse fate, and the ships themselves taken outside and scuttled, on the principle of dead men telling no tales.

A general and severe punishment was inflicted upon the islanders, as a return for their past atrocities and as a warning for the future. It was also determined, for the safety of life and commerce, that the Nicobar Islands should be included in the regular cruising ground of one or more ships of war. It is even a question whether, in the interest of humanity at large, places

which are capable of being made nests of such detestable pirates, should not be annexed and governed by some power capable of keeping them down.

Edward Percival reached Calcutta in safety, transacted his business there, and returned in due time to his home in the United States. It was from his lips that the writer of this account received the particulars of this true story.

### How a Savannah Detective Spotted a Thief.

The Savannah "News" of the 14th says: On Monday last Lieut. William Wray, chief of the detective force, had a dispatch placed in his hands notifying him that one John O'Connor, a clerk, who had robbed his employers in Scranton, Pa., of \$10,000, had absconded and was supposed to be on his way south. The detective immediately took such steps as were necessary to arrest the thief should he come to this city.

On yesterday, while scanning over the passengers on the deck of the steamer *Magnolia*, from New York, which was just making fast to her wharf, he discovered a party who answered to the description of O'Connor. Before the gang-plank was put ashore Lieut. Wray stepped aboard the vessel, and ascended to the upper deck, where the "spotted" party, sitting with all the ease of one who had ten thousand dollars above expenses, tapped him on the leg with his cane, informing him that he wished to see him.

Once taken aside, O'Connor gave up the checks to his baggage, merely requesting that he would be allowed to remain on board the ship until the crowd which was on the wharf had dispersed, which request was granted; and after waiting a short time he was taken in a carriage to the police barracks.

Here he was questioned and told to open a traveling canvas bag which he had kept in hand during all this time, and on turning out its contents, \$9,000 was found sewed up in a pair of pantaloons, and also a pair of false whiskers and moustache. In reply to a question, he stated that he had spent the balance of the money.

But an examination of his pocket-book disclosed \$884, and on a further search \$87 was found on his person, making a total of \$9,971 out of the \$10,000 which he had stolen. O'Connor is a young man of small stature, and of quite prepossessing appearance, and was very neatly and genteelly dressed at the time of his arrest. He will be detained to await a requisition from the Governor of Pennsylvania.

### A Conscientious Criminal.

The Bastop, La., Conservative says: The sheriff was very much astonished the other morning when a gentleman walked into the court room, stepped up behind him, tapped him on the shoulder and told him he was ready to be arrested again.

A recognition of the man was accompanied by a smile on the part of the sheriff; which seemed to indicate at once the entire return of all his confidence in human nature. As soon as the sheriff "rallied," however, he went down into the depths of his inside coat pocket and brought forth a writ of arrest and executed it under the eye of the court, the accused having placed himself in readiness as aforesaid.

It will be remembered that this is the same man who a short time ago was in confinement in the parish jail, and who, upon being allowed a good many privileges, locked the sheriff in and went to his home in Arkansas. Upon his departure though, he left the sheriff a note, stating to him that he need not feel any responsibility on account of his escape, as he would return when the court met; and he has kept his word. He is indicted for murder.

A short time since a San Francisco Chinaman, who had been sick with typhoid fever for two weeks, suddenly, to all appearances, died. The company to which he belonged sent a man to his residence on Jackson street, and he on his return received a permit to make a coffin for the dead man. He was to receive \$35 for his trouble. Some of the deceased man's friends, however, not thinking he was really dead, sent for a Chinese doctor. The medical man soon came, and in accordance with the custom of the country, heated an iron poker to a white heat and burnt the supposed dead man on the forehead and eyebrows; he also stabbed him in various portions of the body. This had the effect of arousing the sick man, who had only been in a trance. There is a coffin for sale at a very cheap figure.