

FLOUNDER STRIKING.

A SPORT OF THE NEGROES OF THE SOUTHERN COAST.

It Puzzles White Man, but the Darky Can Hit a Flounder With His Spear Where You Would See Only Mud—The Expert Fisherman Never Misses His Fish.

Did you ever "strike" a flounder? Probably not unless you have lived or passed some time on the coast of the southern states.

One lovely August evening, just before sunset, as I stood on the back porch of our summer home on the coast of South Carolina, I noticed that our boy Bob, a great big black cheerful looking fellow about 19 years old, as his lazy race and as big a thief as his white race could produce, seemed to be very busy over a boat at the little wharf only a short distance from the house, and as I stood there watching him the mystery was explained.

Noticing that I was watching him with a good deal of interest, he came up to the steps, and removing the tattered rim of what was once a felt hat said:

"Does man, I've goin' 'strikin' flounder tonight. Like to go 'long? It's easy 'nuff," he said. "Just put on ole cloze that don't matter 'bout wettin', and I'll call for you after supper."

After having finished supper and enjoyed a cigar and a stroll on the beach, watching the bathers in the surf and spying a distant sail on the horizon, I proceeded to dress for the occasion. Taking Bob's advice, I selected an old pair of cadet trousers that had stood the test of many a dress parade—a relic of my "rat" year—a cap of the same description and a flannel shirt and a heavy coat, for it was cool on the water after sunset, even in midsummer, not forgetting to take a good supply of tobacco and a pipe to keep off the gnats and sand flies and a plug of chewing tobacco for my companion. Negroes always claim to be out when a white man is around.

I joined Bob at the back door, and we made our way down to the landing. Here we found a large flat bottomed scow, on one side of which was fixed an old grate, in which a fire was burning fiercely, while at the other end was a huge pile of dry oak, with plenty of fat pine for kindling. Standing in the boat was a colored boy of about the same size and blackness of my attendant, whom Bob designated to me as "my mammy's sister Sally's boy Rufus."

Greeting the grinning Rufus, who replied by scraping the bottom of the boat with one foot, while he touched where his hat would have been had he worn any, for no such article encumbered his woolly crown, we all made ourselves comfortable. Bob standing at the bow, Rufus at the stern, with a pole, while I was invited to take the middle seat near the fire and requested to keep the boat clear of water, which as soon as we began our journey rushed through the many crevices with astonishing rapidity.

The night was very dark, but lighted by our fire we began to follow the shore, and our flat bottom enabled us to keep in very close. And now came to me what was the strangest part of the proceeding. Bob, standing, as I have said, in the bow, armed with a striking pole, which is simply a heavy rod about 8 feet long, with a two pronged fork at one end, kept his eyes fixed on the water, which was brightly lit up for several feet in front of the boat, while he suddenly thrust the pole into the water in front of him, and with a check of triumph dashed the pole into the bottom of the boat, and struggling and splashing around was a dark flat object about a foot long, with two great gaping wounds made by the prongs of the fork. The flounder was exactly the color of the bottom of the water and very flat, and how on earth anybody, even a hungry negro, could distinguish it with the boat going at a pretty rapid rate was something I could not make out and have never been able to fathom.

To be sure, the water was quite shallow, ranging in depth from 1 to 2½ feet, and the light from the fire was very bright, but when you take into consideration the fact that the soil was almost black and very muddy and soft, and that the fish almost bury themselves therein, it will be seen that it requires no small amount of skill and quickness to detect the flounder with the boat being rapidly poled along.

And I never saw Bob miss. It would be natural to suppose that the "striker" would occasionally mistake some object for a flounder in waters that teemed with all kinds of fish, or that sometimes he would fail to secure the fish, even if he struck correctly, for it is a known fact that "the biggest fish I ever caught was the one that got away," but, no, I never knew Bob or any of the other many negroes whom I afterward saw out "striking" to be guilty of failure. Sometimes the flounder would be pierced by only one prong instead of two, and sometimes the wound would be very near the side of the fish, but secure him they always did.

That night we were out about two hours and secured eight of as fine flounders as I ever saw, ranging in size from 10 to 15 inches, three of which furnished a very fine breakfast dish the next morning.—Philadelphia Times.

Quality Against Quantity.

As regards woman suffrage, New York, with all its fashionable furore, is still in that stage of the agitation—passed years ago in Boston—where the "antis" seek to make an impression by claiming "quality as against quantity" of names in their petitions. To put forward this rather vulgar boast was soon found to be very indiscreet campaigning in New England and a powerful help to the other side.—Boston Transcript.

MARKED ALIKE.

A Weird Story of Two Men Whose Singular Wounds Were the Same.

"I am not a believer in ghosts, reincarnations or the supernatural in any shape, but I had a singular experience some years ago which I have never been able to account for satisfactorily," said J. P. Lacroix of Montreal.

"I was second mate of a merchant ship in 1882. Among the crew was a tough customer named Lander, always in trouble. He had a frightful scar, extending from brow to chin, the result of a dock fight. He had a bullet wound which had taken away the lobe of his right ear, besides a peculiar protuberance like a wen on his forehead. I would take my oath there was not another man alive marked just like him. At the end of that voyage Lander killed his wife and cut his own throat. He severed the windpipe, but he recovered. The wound in his throat healed, but left a hole, which he had to cover with his hand when he spoke. He breathed through a silver tube. He was tried and convicted, and happening to be in port I was present at the hanging and saw the body buried.

"In 1890 I was on the gold coast of Africa. Ashore one day I came across a man bossing a gang of negro laborers. His form seemed strangely familiar, and I started with surprise when I saw him place his hand over his throat when giving some orders. Going closer, I saw the scar, the wen, the lobeless ear, the hole in the throat, the silver tube and every feature and characteristic of a man I saw hanged and buried. I got into conversation with him. He said his name was Danler. He was unable to tell how he came by the wound in his throat, ear and face. He said he must have had a long illness. He remembered being in a hospital, he said, but it was like a dream, and he had no recollection of his life before that.

"He said he remembered, while still ill, taking a long voyage—he didn't know where from—until he had landed where I met him. He told me my face looked like one he had seen in a dream, but he knew he had never seen me before. How do I account for it? I don't try to. I am only telling the facts. I don't know whether Danler was Lander come to life again or a reincarnation of him. Maybe Lander's neck was not broken and some scientific chap had been experimenting on him with a battery. All I know is that no two men could possibly be marked in exactly the same way. If it was Lander, he was greatly benefited by the change, as on inquiry I found that he bore a splendid reputation as a quiet, law abiding, peaceable citizen."—Chicago Times.

FAMILY HANDWRITING.

Experts Say All of a Generation Have the Same Characteristics.

Experts in handwriting say that all the people of a single generation write alike, and it is well known that most French handwriting has a strong family likeness to the eyes of others than Frenchmen. Nearly all Chinamen of the washhouse class look alike to superficial observers, and persons unaccustomed to colored persons find difficulty in distinguishing one from another.

It needs, however, a comparison of two or three family photograph albums of 20 or 30 years ago to convince men and women of today that there are striking superficial likenesses running through Americans of a given generation. All these old albums show curious resemblances, chiefly perhaps of dress and face, but sufficiently striking for one family album at first glance to be taken for another. As page after page of each is turned over there is the same succession of men, women and children in full figure, sitting, standing, posed in groups of two or three, with hats, without hats, draped in shawls, and manifestly dressed in their best for the occasion.

The photographers of those days chose, for reasons of their own, to make full length pictures, and as they were unusually small costume counted for a great deal and helped to intensify the general likeness running the whole generation.—Philadelphia Press.

Carnot and Jean Carries.

The death of Jean Carries, the sculptor, recalls an anecdote in which he and the late President Carnot were the principal actors. The artist's busts and figures at the Champ de Mars excited the admiration of all, and they were deservedly classed in the first rank. M. Carnot, when on his visit to the salon, noticed an old man, who seemed much moved on seeing him, standing before the works of art of the sculptor. Some one said to the president, after pointing out the artist: "Here is need for reparation, M. le President. Carries is one of our most skillful men of art, and he is not yet decorated." Forthwith M. Carnot detached from the buttonhole of one of the officers of the military household in the place of a cross of the Legion of Honor and placed it himself on the breast of Jean Carries. The next day, in The Official, the artist was named a chevalier of the order.—London Figaro.

Stanford's Retort.

Once Senator Stanford was traveling through California in his private car. The train had stopped at a small town, and the senator was leisurely strolling back and forth on the platform at the depot. A baggageman was unloading trunks, and in doing so carelessly pitched one onto the platform, and it burst open. The senator looked at it and remarked, "Well, that's a shame." The baggageman impudently asked, "Do you own this trunk?" The answer came quickly, "No, young man, but I own this road."—Horseman.

It is said that Lord Campbell was often overbearing and irritable. A lawyer who had long struggled against the chief justice's criticisms finally folded up his brief and remarked, "I will retire, my lord, and no longer trespass on your lordship's impatience."

A FAT MAN'S DEED.

Story of a Tragic Scene on a Brooklyn Trolley Car Which Might Be True.

A very stout old Brooklyn gentleman squeezed himself past two women on a Putnam avenue car and wedged in between one of them and a man at the other end of the seat. The fit was such a tight one that the women held their breaths and assumed a panicky appearance. At the corner where the car turns into Putnam avenue the fat man turned like a big turret and put up a chubby finger. The car stopped.

"Putnam avenue; Grand avenue and Fulton street!" shouted the conductor. The fat man settled back and resumed reading a newspaper, which he had dropped in his lap.

"Want to get out here?" asked the conductor, with his hand on the bell-rope.

The fat man shook his head. There was an angry twang of the cord, and the trolley began to whiz.

At Nostrand avenue the chubby finger went up again. The car stopped. Nobody moved. Then the man whirled up the fares got angry.

"See here," he exclaimed after he had climbed along the step on the side of the car until he was opposite the fat man, "what do you mean by telling me to stop for when you don't want to get off?"

"Why," responded the mountain of flesh as coolly as such a mass of adipose could be cool, "the car jolts so that I couldn't read this paragraph, which is slightly blurred. I merely wanted to have the car stand still until I had finished it. That's all. Now, if you can go along slowly without jolting, I will be able to get along very nicely, but if I come across another bad line or two I'll put my hand back of my head, and you stop. It's too much trouble for me to turn around."

The conductor's eyes twinkled in the orbits. He placed his hand to his head and uttered shriek after shriek. Benson was shattered. He had become cross eyed and insane.—New York Mail and Express.

ANCIENT LIGHTHOUSES.

Beacon Lights to Guide Mariners Coeval With the Earliest Commerce.

Beacon lights to guide the wave-tossed mariner to a safe harbor must have been almost coeval with the earliest commerce. There is positive record that lighthouses were built in ancient times, though few evidences now remain to us from old writers or in crumbled ruins. This is not strange, for light towers, never the most stable architectural form, were exposed to the storms of sea and war.

The Greeks attributed the first lighthouses to Hercules, and he was considered the protector of voyagers. It is claimed by some that Homer refers to lighthouses in the nineteenth book of the "Iliad."

Virgil mentions a light on a temple to Apollo which, visible far out at sea, warned and guided mariners. The Colossus at Rhodes, erected about 300 B. C., is said to have shown a signal light from its uplifted hand.

The oldest towers known were built by the Libyans in lower Egypt. They were temples also, and the lightkeeper priests taught pilotage, hydrography and navigation. The famous tower on the island of Pharos, at Alexandria, built about 285 B. C., is the first lighthouse of undoubted record. This tower, constructed by Sostratus, the architect, was square in plan, of great height and built in offsets. An open brazier at the top of the tower contained the fuel for the light. At Dover and Boulogne, on either side of the English channel, were ancient lighthouses built by the Romans. But the lighthouse at Corunna, Spain, built in the reign of Trajan and reconstructed in 1634, is believed to be the oldest existing lighthouse.—E. P. Adams in Cassier's Magazine.

The Drug Store Telephone.

"Accommodation bureaus are all right when they are conducted as such," said a west side druggist, "but the sign over my door was intended to inform the public that drugs were dispensed within and not information doled out or telephone messages delivered blocks away. I make no kick when stamps are asked for and the city directory consulted by people, but when they ring up the telephone and call me from my work to answer it and then want a message delivered to a friend living a long distance from the store only a certificate of membership in the Anti-Swearing club which I have pasted on the transmitter keeps me from uttering fancy language. This morning I was at the breakfast table and was called to the phone. I found it was a lady who patronized me about once a month. She didn't talk plainly and kept me guessing for 15 minutes what she was driving at. I discovered that she wanted me to tell her next door neighbor that she wouldn't be home to dinner and ask her to open a window of the house and for mercy sake feed the poor little cat." The telephone has been removed.—Buffalo Enquirer.

Angelo's Verdict.

Once a painter notorious for plagiarisms executed a historical picture in which every figure of importance was copied from some other artist, so that very little remained to himself. It was shown to Michael Angelo by a friend, who begged his opinion of it. "Excellent," said Angelo, "only, at the day of judgment, when all bodies will resume their own limbs again, I do not know what will become of that historical painting, for there will be nothing left of it."—San Francisco Argonaut.

The Origin of Dyspepsia.

Doctor—It's merely a case of dyspepsia, ma'am.

Wife—And what does that come from?

Doctor—It comes from the Greek, ma'am.

Wife—Ah, I thought he'd been getting at something. He was all right as long as he stuck to beer.—Wilkesbarre Newsdealer.

IMPURITIES IN FOOD.

They Are Not as Common as Many Persons May Suppose.

Singularly exaggerated ideas concerning the adulteration of food are very generally held, according to Dr. H. W. Wiley, chemist of the United States department of agriculture. Sand, for instance, is not sold with sugar—at least in the United States.

The granulated and lump sugars in the market are almost absolutely pure, powdered sugar sometimes, though rarely, contains a little flour or starch, and low grade sugars are impure chiefly through the molasses and water they are made to absorb in manufacture.

Not as good a report can be given of sirups. There is very little pure maple sirup, most of what is sold as such being a mixture of glucose or cane sirups, with a small proportion of the product of the maple, while in an imitation actually protected by a patent the maple flavor is given by an extract of hickory bark. Liquid honey is largely adulterated with glucose. Of comb honey, however, only that in bottles and jars is impure, the old impression that comb honey on the frame is adulterated having been proved to be erroneous.

Ground coffee is so largely adulterated with chicory, peas, beans, etc., that it is rarely found pure, and even the unground berry is adulterated. Tea is rarely mixed with foreign leaves, but frequently has its weight increased by the addition of salts of iron and copper—materials quite prejudicial to health. Cocoa and chocolate are largely adulterated with starch and sugar, and products claimed to be greatly improved as to digestibility may have little of the virtues of the original cocoa bean left in them.

A danger in canned goods is the use of adulterated tin, which may contain as high as 12 per cent of lead, the organic salts formed by the corrosion of the lead being always poisonous. The common practice of coloring canned peas with copper is very objectionable. The use of preservatives, such as salicylic acid, is not without risk, while an occasional source of danger is the development of nitrogenous bodies called ptomaines in preserved meats. The above are illustrations of the principal food adulterations, which, though bad enough, are insignificant in comparison with the startling reports that have been published. Much the greater part of foods we eat is pure and wholesome.

NATAL AUTOGRAPHS.

The Sign Manual of the Child That Does Not Change in Life.

There is born with every one of us and continues unchanged during our lives an unfading and ineradicable mark or mark, which absolutely distinguishes each one of us from every other fellow being. These physical marks never change from the cradle to the grave. This born autograph is impossible to counterfeit, and there is no duplicate of it among the teeming billions in the world. Look at the insides of your hands and the soles of your feet; closely examine the ends of your fingers. You see circles and curves and arches and whorls, some prominent with deep corrugations, others minute and delicate, but all a well defined and closely traced pattern. There is your physiological signature.

Run your hands through your hair and press finger nails on a piece of clear glass. You see all the delicate tracing transferred—not two fingers alike; even "the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth." They are distinctly different. Even twins may be so little different in size, features and general physical condition as to be scarcely distinguishable, yet their finger autographs are radically different.

In fact, in all humanity every being carries with him on his baby fingers and his wrinkled hand of decrepit old age the identical curves, arches and circles that were born with him. Nothing except dismemberment can obliterate or disguise them. Criminals may burn and scar their hands, but nature, when she restores the cuticle, invariably brings back the natal autograph.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Way of Long Twilight.

On first thought it seems to be a rather paradoxical statement that the nearer we approach to the equator the shorter is that intermediate stage or transition from day to night and from night to day, which we call "twilight." This being the case, however, the period of duration of "the dim, uncertain light" in all tropical countries is very short when compared with that of countries of high northern or southern latitude. The explanation is this: On the equator the sun's path is at exact right angles with the horizon. The last beam of light fades from view when the sun is at 18 degrees below the horizon. This 18 degree mark is quickly reached at the equator for reasons given in the first sentence of this explanation. The farther from the equator we get the less becomes the angles which the sun's course makes with the horizon, and the longer the time required for him to reach the 18 degree mark; hence the longer the period of twilight.—St. Louis Republic.

Cinnamon and Cholera.

A decoction of cinnamon is recommended as a drink to be taken freely in localities where there is typhoid fever or cholera, for cinnamon has the power to destroy all infectious microbes. Even its scent kills them, while it is perfectly harmless to human beings. It is said that the essence of cinnamon, when exposed in the sickroom, will kill typhoid bacilli in 12 hours and prevent fresh cases.—Kansas City Times.

A great idea is usually original to more than one discoverer. Great ideas come when the world needs them. They surround the world's ignorance and press for admission.—A. Phelps.

One of the first things to be done in case your clothing catches fire is to keep as cool as possible.

The Bear and the Umbrella.

How much danger is there to the pound in a wild black bear when you meet him in his haunts accidentally and at close quarters? Mrs. C. F. Latham, wife of mine host at Oak Lodge, on the Indian river peninsula (Brevard county, Fla.), was returning from the beach alone and armed only with an umbrella. When just a quarter of a mile from this very place, she heard the rustling of some animal coming toward her through the saw palmettos.

Thinking it must be a raccoon, she quickly picked up a chunk of palmetto wood and held it ready to whack Mr. Coon over the head the instant he emerged. All at once, with a mighty rustling, out stepped a big black bear within six feet of her! The surprise was mutual and profound. Naturally Mrs. Latham was scared, but not out of her wits, and she decided that to run would be to invite pursuit and possibly attack. She stood her ground and said nothing, and the bear rose on his hind legs to get a better look at her, making two or three feints in her direction with his paws.

Feeling that she must do something, Mrs. Latham pointed her umbrella at the bear and quickly opened and closed it two or three times. "Woof!" said the bear. Turning about, he plunged into the palmettos and went crashing away, while the lady ran homeward as fast as she could go. So much for the "savage and aggressive" disposition of the black bear.—W. T. Hornaday in St. Nicholas.

An Uneasy Plaster.

"I want an uneasy plaster, sah!" The colored woman, whose head was done up in a handma handkerchief, turban fashion, offered a silver quarter of a dollar to the apothecary as she spoke.

"—don't think I understand you," replied the man behind the counter.

"It's an uneasy plaster I want," repeated the woman.

"What's that?"

"Uneasy plaster, sah."

"I don't know what you mean."

"The missus said I was ter git an uneasy plaster. Here's the money for it."

The apothecary reflected for a moment and scratched his head. Then an idea seemed to break upon him.

"A porous plaster is the most uneasy kind of plaster I know of," he said.

"I'll give you one of those. If it's not right, you can bring it back."

The colored woman did bring it back about 15 minutes later. She also had a note from her mistress explaining that adhesive plaster, for a cent finger, was the article wanted. This, by the way, is a true story.—Washington Star.

As Good as a Glass Stopper.

If you want a stopper for a bottle of acid or any substance that would naturally call for a glass stopper, because of the danger that the cork would be eaten up by the contents of the bottle, take the cork and steep it in vaseline. It will then be impervious to acids of any kind, and no action of chemicals will decay it. It will, in fact, be as good for all purposes as a glass stopper.

Jewish guides in Rome never pass under the arch of Titus, but walk around it. The reason is it commemorates a victory over their race.



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