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"GREAT AMERICAN DESERT" STORIES. NUMBER ONE.

Those of us who studied geography twenty-five or thirty years ago learned the location and boundaries of the "Great American Desert," but since that time, it has faded from the earth and also from our geographical maps. During its passage a new style of architecture sprang into vogue on the plains of western Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Colorado, which architecture, also has followed the passing of the desert and both have gone the way of all the earth.

The "Dug-out" and "Sod Shanty" were each a peculiar house unto itself. The dug-out was built nearly always, on the edge of a "draw." This draw was a depression on the otherwise level prairie varying in width from one hundred feet to one hundred yards, and from one mile to several miles in length. The depression is from one to ten feet deep. Into the marginal banks of these draws the homesteader dug a room from ten to sixteen feet square and from five to eight feet deep. Then he raised a center-pole on which he placed rafters of poles and brush and covered it with buffalo sod. A small window was then placed in the rear gable and a door in the front of the building next the draw, and in this crude dwelling the family lived while proving up the claim. The cook stove, bed, table, etc., were all in one room.

In company with a physician, the writer stopped for a drink at one of these crude dwellings of the plains and received a hearty welcome and a refreshing drink of water from a woman whom the doctor had attended at the birth of her second child, in a small dug-out, fifteen miles from the nearest town. There, under the blue sky where the pale moon painted the wide expanse of prairie a dull gray and the roaring wind and howl of the Coyote mingled their woeful sounds, upon a rude couch of straw, the mother bore in silence, her second son. Talk of heroines, this mother was one! Little the wonder that Funston's 20th Kansas made a proud record in the Philippines when his soldiers were selected from the sons of such women!

In company with seven other men the writer enjoyed the wide-open hospitality one night, of one of those hardy pioneers of the Great American Desert. We drove up to the sod shanty just at sunset of a cold day in February when our thermometer registered 20 degrees below zero. We asked the man of the house if we could lodge with him for the night, he said "certainly, unhitch your team and come right in." We put our team in a sod shed and repaired to the house. The cookstove, bed and table were there. The room was about twelve feet square, sod walls, sod roof and plank floor. This plank floor was a luxury. After we had supper of hot biscuits, ham and coffee, when the good woman had washed the dishes we played "seven-up" for an hour or two. Then "we all" went out to our wagon to get the bunks while the good house-wife and her little girl went to bed. We came in, closed the door and spread our bunks on the floor. Eight men, tired from a fifty mile drive that day through one of the coldest winds that ever swept the prairies, lay down like so many sardines, side by side on the hard floor and slept the sleep of the weary. When one turned all turned, so crowded together were we. We rose early the next morning at the call of our host and, taking up our couches went out to our wagon while the good lady rose and made her toilet. She baked 6 dozen biscuits for breakfast and sold us 5 dozen which we ate, paying her 50 cents, all she would charge. She kept the other dozen for the family. In a veritable blizzard the next morning with the thermometer at 25 below zero, this openhearted hospitable pioneer of the plains bade us god-speed as we faced the biting wind, in our journey toward the west, telling us "to be sure and stop with him" on our return journey. Not one cent of pay would he have for the night's lodging.

Marshall, Mo., got mad at Uncle Sam and took a "home grown" count of her own people. Uncle Sam's enumerators gave her 5,086 and according to the Democratic-News the town has exactly 5,436, a gain of 350.

An effort is now being made by the people of Stubenville, O. to raise sufficient funds to erect a monument over the grave of Lincoln's great war Secretary Stanton. It was undertaken once before but for some reason was dropped.

And as Bryanism died

It gasped with its latest breath,
"I know what's the matter with me!
I've talked myself to death!"

—Chicago Tribune.

Inadvertently, Bryan has acknowledged his appreciation of the presence of prosperity. When, save in a time of unprecedented prosperity, would a man wholly inexperienced in the publishing business venture to start a paper?—Ex.

A few democratic papers, who do not know any better, have been trying to make capital out of the fact that there have been several defaulting cashiers, etc., since McKinley was re-elected. If Bryan had been elected there would soon have been nothing to steal. —Benton (Ill.) Rep.

Mr. Bryan would like Mr. Cleveland to explain what he considers the first principles of democracy. This is certainly a poser. It is a good deal like the boy who inquired, "Pa, what are your politics?" "My child, I have none, I am a democrat," was the response.

A man over in Blair county Pa. died some time ago and having no heirs, his estate, amounting to \$15,302 escheated to the state. Before however, the process was completed for transferring the estate to the State of Pennsylvania, the lawyers had secured it all in fees except \$1,551. \$1,200 of this was to go to another attorney but he refused it. Had he accepted it the state would have gotten just \$351 of the original \$15,302. This is a striking illustration of lawyers getting what they go after.

Honduras, the race horse that S. J. Carpenter, of Trenton, sold in Chicago a few weeks ago for \$425, died while being taken aboard ship for England. The report is that the horse died of sea sickness. "It is very likely, however," the Tribune suggests, that the horse was really homesick. It is pretty rough on a Missouri horse to sever the ties that bind him to his state and native land and go into the country he has heard cursed so much."

John Hartman, a justice of the peace over in New Jersey (the robber trust state) got mad at some visitors and used all kinds of sulphurous adjectives. After the fuss was over and the smoke cleared away he had the mayor of the town to issue a warrant for his arrest saying "I was caught red-handed in the fuss and why should I not pay a fine as any other citizen?" A small fine was imposed and the justice who swore in his own court paid it.

It seems that among a certain class of people there is a prevalent idea that the County School Commissioner is the greatest fraud of the present day. This idea may be due to the present day. This idea may be due to the disappointment of some would-be commissioners, or it may be due to that small class of pessimistic "kickers," who are always self constituted critics. While some commissioners are undoubtedly recreant to their trust, yet we judge of the good or evil of a body of men, not by the faults and vices of a majority, but by what is done by the majority.—Ex.

ODD FELLOWS.

Indianapolis Preparing for Sovereign Grand Lodge—Linkets.

The Indiana grand lodge of Odd Fellows' officers has made arrangements for the meeting of the sovereign grand lodge in Indianapolis September 16 to 21 next. It was agreed to offer prizes aggregating \$1,000 for drills and considerable sums for prizes for degree work. A parade and display of fireworks will be features of the meeting. Members of the committee say Indianapolis will have the largest crowd and the finest display ever seen in the city. The Indianapolis business men will be asked to make up an entertainment fund.

Illinois Odd Fellows have contributed over \$4,000 to the Galveston relief fund.

The membership of the order in Delaware is 82,548, a gain of 21 for the past year.

New Jersey made a net increase of 1,900 during the year. Present membership, 25,494.

Grand Secretary Perkins of Massachusetts has issued a convenient dictionary of the subordinate and Rebekah lodges and subordinate encampments in the state.

The grand lodge of Ohio has placed itself squarely on the side of the proper observance of the Sabbath by prohibiting its trustees from holding meetings on that day.

The revised constitution of the grand lodge of Pennsylvania, adopted at the last annual meeting, has gone into effect. It will not be altered for at least ten years.

The sum of \$1,500 is allowed the grand sire yearly for clerk hire and for visitations. The salary of the grand secretary of the sovereign grand lodge is \$1,500 and the assistant grand secretary \$1,800.

Arrangements have been made by the order in Toronto to take up the competition in degree work which the lodges in that city have carried on for the past two years.

New York heads the list in the amount paid out for relief by Rebekah lodges during the past year, having \$13,123.05 to its credit. Massachusetts is second with \$6,802.46.—Ex.

"Reuben" at Church With McKinley

"This is Sunday, and this morning we asked the Lord to forgive us, and went to the Metropolitan church, where the people look at and think about the president instead of the Lord," writes a Boone county Democrat from Washington, over the appropriately selected pen name, "Reuben," to the Columbia Herald. "The Metropolitan church is a magnificent building, with a cupola twice as high as the church, and as high as any other tower in town—it looks like a theater on the inside, excepting that the front seats are not so well filled up. It has big choir on the second floor where the congregation can't get at them to join them in the singing—it runs sixteen ushers, a big pipe organ and two preachers. At 11 o'clock people thronged at the church doors on the outside, and, as the boys in Missouri would say, began to 'rubber neck' up the street. My wife nudged my arm and said, 'Come on,' and we 'rubber necked' too. We lined up with those in the first row, so we could see the 'whole show.' In a moment two trotting bays were halted at the stone steps by two gentlemen of colored persuasion, and as the door of the beautiful carriage swung open, President McKinley, with elastic step came forth, with smiles and a high hat. With a happy greeting and an indescribably pleasant smile, he graciously tipped his hat to us and others—and with the flashing of an eye, was within the church and seated on a soft, rented plush pew, paid for. I suppose by the government. People who think there are any flies oh McKinley are mistaken. He is a clean man—I mean his clothes, and his face, and finger nails. He looks like a white plaster-of-paris man, sprung forth from a toy bandbox.

The fact is, if he were not a republican president, everybody would call him an ideal American gentleman. The first thing I did when passed out of view into the church was to look at myself and wonder what I was doing with so many old clothes on. He made me feel like buttoning up my vest and going to get a new shave. My wife says he is the first man besides me she ever wanted to kiss. And when a wife wants to kiss another man besides her husband you may know that he is a pretty nice looking man, or that her husband is pretty far away. We took a seat in the church within a few feet of the president. We saw him read a Psalm, and heard him try to sing. As a singer McKinley is not a success; he has ruined his voice by singing false chords and changing his tunes too often. But when he couldn't reach the high notes he would just smile and show his white pearly teeth and people at a distance thought he was singing and didn't know the difference. He has marched so much to the music of others, that it seems like it is hard for him to catch the pitch. When the bat came around he recognized it with the consciousness of the fact that he was going to be president for the next four years to come."

Frankford, Ky., Jan. 4.—The January term of the Franklin circuit court, at which the cases of H. S. Secretary of State Finley, W. H. Culton and others charged with complicity in the murder of William Goebel, will be called, will convene Monday. There is little probability that any of the cases will be tried at this term, however, and chief interest will be as to whether any additional indictments in connection with the assassination are returned.

Robert Noaks, upon whose testimony corroborated by Culton, and Wharton Golden, mainly ex-Secretary of State Caleb Powers was convicted and given a life sentence is supposed to have left the country. He is under bond to appear as a witness next week and his bondsmen are searching for him in various parts of the United States and Canada. Noaks is alleged to have made a statement when he left Kentucky, admitting perjury on his part, but his friends deny this. On the same day the court of appeals will reorganize with Judge Orear, Republican, on the bench, and a decision in the Powers case is expected some time this month.

WORLD'S NEWS IN BRIEF.

January 5, the gross gold in the United States Treasury broke all records of the past by reaching the enormous sum of \$489,709,005.

Li Hung Chang has suffered a serious relapse and will not be able to conduct the peace negotiations for China with the powers. The choice of a successor may delay the settlement of the difficulties in China.

Governor Lon Stephens used 30,000 words in his last message to the state legislature. This is 18,000 more than President McKinley used in his message to Congress. He stated in the beginning of his message that he could be as brief as he could and hence he boiled the message down to 30,000!

That squint in Dockery's eye is striking terror into the old state house gang. Dockery says he has promised nothing and hence has no promise to redeem. If Dockery tells the truth, and doubtless he is, the old gang will wish they never had seen the man that "squints."

Hon. J. R. Burton will succeed Senator Baker, as the new Senator from Kansas. Burton lacked but one vote six years ago, of being elected but was beaten by Baker. J. R. Burton is a peerless orator and Kansas will take no back seat for the next six years, if Burton lives.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Lease says she will quit dabbling in politics and will go back to Wichita, Kansas and keep house for Mr. Lease. She has withdrawn her suit for divorce on the request of her children and she and Mr. Lease will live together again. Mr. Lease says he never agreed with her ideas of politics and reform.

DESTINATION OF SUN.

Herschel's Conclusions of Century Ago Are Being Verified.

More than a century ago Sir William Herschel was able to fix roughly what we call the apex of the sun's way in space, or the point among the stars toward which that way is for the moment directed. We say for the moment, but we meant that moment of which Herschel saw the beginning in 1790 and upon whose end no man of those now living shall ever look. Herschel found that a comparison of old stellar observations seemed to indicate that the stars in a certain part of the sky were coming out, as it were, and that the stars in the opposite part of the heavens seemed to be drawing in, or becoming smaller. There can be but one reasonable explanation of this. We must be moving toward that part of the sky where the stars are separating. Just as a man watching a regiment of soldiers approaching will see at first only a confused body of men, but as they come nearer the individual soldiers will seem to separate, until at length each one is seen distinct from all the others. Herschel fixed the position of the apex a point in the constellation Hercules. The most recent investigations of Newcomb published only a few months ago, have, on the whole, verified Herschel's conclusions. With the intuitive power of rare genius Herschel had been able to sift truth out of error. The observational data at his disposal would now be called rude, but they disclosed to the scrutiny of his acute understanding the germ of truth that was in them. Later investigations have improved the position of our knowledge, until we can now say that the present direction of the solar motion is known within very narrow limits. A tiny circle in the heavens might point his hand and say: "Yonder little circle contains the goal toward which the sun and planets are hastening today. Even the speed of this motion has been subjected to a measurement and found to be about ten miles per second."

Canal Travel in Ohio

Travel in Ohio is greatly helped by the canal, the greatest of which is the Imperial or Grand canal, connecting Canton and Fekin. Innumerable branches are passing through countless cities, towns and villages connect the interior limits of the empire with this artery of waterways. To overcome the difference of level between two canals, a peculiar and ingeniously constructed gate is, sloping at an angle of 45 degrees, used, and by means of a capstan or two the boat is drawn over until, having passed the point of equilibrium, it is launched into the lower canal. To prevent the sea shipping too much water, a screen or wickerwork is fixed at the bow. The rivers and canals are the real highways of Ohio, and by these hordes of boxers from the inland provinces are now flocking to the coast towns and foreign settlements.

INVENTION OF PAPER.

Chinese Made It in the First Century of the Christ Era.

Paper was first manufactured by the Chinese in the first century A. D. Up to that time they wrote on thin slips of bamboo, the instrument employed being not a pen or brush, but a pointed tool. The books of these ancient days were made by cutting the bamboo, after removing the bark, into thin sheets, which were strung together as to comp. a fairly spacious, though clumsy, volume. Later on it was found better to pound the bamboo to a paste in a mortar together with water, and the resulting substance was spread upon a flat surface to dry. This, in fact, was the first paper, in the modern acceptance of the term, though the Egyptian papyrus, made from a kind of reed that grew along the banks of the Nile, antedated it by several centuries. After a while the manufacture of this paper was improved by adding to it silk and other materials. The Tartars borrowed the art, substituting cotton which was plentiful in their country, and from them the Arabs acquired it, using linen instead of cotton. It was in this way that paper-making was first brought into Europe, being introduced by the Arabs.

Fashionable Chirography.

In chirography the large hand, both English and round, is affected, and to be quite up to date should not write more than three or four lines on each page. In being given a letter or note the preference is given to the fourth page, and the letter is continued over the first page, then on the second, and then on the third, and so on, writing only on the fourth and last page, leaving the second and third blank. No particular style of pen is used exclusively this season and, either steel or diamond point is chosen to suit the fancy of the writer. Dresden china penholders are as plentiful as blackberries in the season and come with both gilt and silver mountings. A very attractive-looking holder is of tortoise shell twisted to resemble a horn and mounted with silver in an antique design.