

CASTAWAYS IN A BOAT.

Terrible Experience of Survivors of the Wrecked Atacama.

Four castaways in a boat without a scrap of food or drop of water were picked up on the Australian coast on February 17. They were Capt. Spruit and part of the crew of the wrecked ship Atacama, which left Newcastle on January 30, bound for San Diego. When several days out the vessel sank and the crew, 17 in number, got away in three boats. That containing the captain and four men capsized on February 6, and one of her company was drowned, the rest being saved after sticking to the boat without food or water for nearly four days. No tidings of the other two boats reached port. The story of the wreck and subsequent sufferings of the crew, as told by Boatswain Joseph Figueroa, is a thrilling one. He says:

"The Atacama had traveled about 500 miles from Newcastle when, in the midst of a heavy southerly gale, it was discovered that she was leaking. All hands were ordered on deck and every nerve strained by the crew to pump the water out. For three days the pumping was continued, and desperate efforts were made to render the ship seaworthy. On the third day preparations were made to lower the boat and leave the Atacama to her fate."

It was estimated by the boatswain that there was enough food on board to last for 20 days, by which time the men felt confident that land would be reached. In lowering the captain's boat she was slightly damaged, and two of the men refused to sail in her. Thus she only carried five passengers—the captain, the boatswain, the steward, an able seaman and the apprentice. Before the Atacama was left her well was sounded, with the result that 12 feet of water was discovered in her. On February 6 the most sensational incident of the voyage was experienced. In the midst of the rough sea and the most trying conditions generally, the lifeboat turned turtle. The crew, already in an enfeebled condition, were precipitated into the ocean. The oar and stores, the sextant and compass and chronometer of the captain were lost, and the apprentice boy disappeared. It seems that the lad was enveloped in an overcoat and blanket when he was thrown into the water he was consequently entangled, being powerless to keep afloat. The steward and the sailor managed to get hold of the keel of the lifeboat, but the captain was unable to approach it. Figueroa seized him with one hand and succeeded in dragging him toward the boat, so that the captain could secure a hold on the keel. Two of the men forward and the captain and boatswain clung to the keel. The task of maintaining this position was a desperate one. The men were becoming still more exhausted, when another unexpected incident occurred. A heavy wave struck the craft heavily and caused her to right herself. This movement of the captain some distance away, he was struggling in the water when Figueroa made another heroic attempt to save him. He swam toward the captain and again pulled him toward the boat, eventually, as a result of a desperate effort, placing him in her and tying him to one of the seats. By this time it was apparent to the crew that a little more privation would produce another fatality. Figueroa tore a couple of buttons from a clothing and put them in his mouth to appease the pangs of hunger well as to allay his thirst. But it was a poor substitute, and the gallant crew had at last to take a drink of water. He could not assist his distressed comrades, so he directed his best energies to manage the boat and steer for the land. Figueroa states that at this stage could see land, but that was an impossibility, for the reason that the boat was over 40 miles out to sea. February 9 the steamer Levertve in sight and picked up the poor fellows. They were given every attention possible and taken to Sydney, San Francisco Chronicle.

The Modern Locomotive.

The fact is stated that in a single case of the standard locomotives employed by a leading railroad of America, there are, counting individual bolts and nuts, though not nails in cab and tender, over 20,000 pieces. The modern locomotive is really a wonderful example of an evolution intended in its successive stages of type to type by a keen, human intelligence.

Siberia Convicts.

James Young Simpson, who has recently traversed Siberia, thinks that only one per cent. of the convicts are sent to that country for violent offenses.

Gallantry Personified.

"Now, can you guess my age, Joe?" "How was that?" "He said: 'Dot's mein picycle.'" "Cycling Gazette."

ANNUAL SNAKE HUNT.

Peculiar Custom That Prevails in Massachusetts.

The young men of Byfield have a custom of celebrating the advent of spring with a grand reptile hunt which is probably indigenous to this section alone, but it has been followed there for many years, and the sport is participated in by a large company of young men. A great many years ago a party of young men who were wandering their way through a rough pasture discovered a spot of remarkable beauty and stopped there to rest. One of the party caught sight of a snake of unusual size, which was no sooner dispatched than another was seen gliding along the ground. In a few moments they were wriggling about in all directions, and the young men discovered that they were in the midst of a den of snakes. The ground was filled with snake holes, the winter abode of countless numbers of the reptiles.

The young men rained stones on the heads of the snakes until they were tired and then decamped, not having lessened the number to any perceptible degree. Since that time, about the middle of April, a party of men arm themselves with shovels and cudgels and stones and raid the snake colony. Every year finds no diminution in the number of snakes, and consequently there is an abundance of the "sport." It is not everyone, however, who takes delight in this kind of sport; for the wriggling, slimy creatures just awaking from their winter torpor are not pleasant-looking customers. It is not related that any woman ever took part in any of these expeditions.

Sometimes a few hours of slaughter will accumulate nearly 250 feet of snakes, individual specimens in some instances measuring six or seven feet. If anyone has a desire to pay a lone visit to the city of snakes he will find it by the side of the B. & M. railroad, between Byfield and Newbury, about two miles below the former place. This section has been given the peculiar name of "Penny Honorary." Through it flows a sluggish stream, a perfect habitat for reptiles that flourish in the low lands. The high land back of it the black snakes and the upland runners find in every way suitable for their winter rendezvous. April 18 is the date set by custom for the grand snake drive.—Boston Transcript.

CHANGES IN THE HEAVENS.

Time Has Little Effect on the Starry Firmament.

If Job were to rise from the dead and look upon the heavens, says Prof. T. J. J. See in the Atlantic, he would see the constellations related to one another as of old, but he would find that the pole had shifted its position among the stars; and if an immortal could witness the grand phenomenon which the procession of the equinoxes produces, in about 12,900 years he would find the heavens so altered that the former aspect could be recognized only by an understanding of the changes which had intervened. As Humboldt justly remarks, the beautiful and celebrated constellation of the Southern Cross, never seen by the present inhabitants of Europe, and visible in the United States only on our southern coast, formerly shone on the shores of the Baltic, and can again be seen in that latitude in about 18,000 years. The Cross will then be visible on the shores of Hudson's bay, but at present it is going rapidly southward, and in a few thousand years will be invisible even at the extreme point of Florida. In like manner, the brilliant star Canopus in the constellation Argo, situated some 37 degrees south of Sirius, is now visible in the southern portion of the United States; in about 12,000 years it will cease to rise even in Central America. From the same cause, if Ptolemy were to again look upon the heavens at Alexandria, he would be unable to recognize Alpha and Beta Centauri, which he easily saw and catalogued in the time of Hadrian; at present these magnificent stars are just visible at the pyramids near Cairo, and in a few more thousand years they can be seen by dwellers on the Nile only in upper Egypt.

His Trade-Mark.

"That German baker had the most ingenious turnout in the fancy-dress bicycle parade."

More Important.

"Speaking of the cotton crop," said Throckmorton. "Don't mention the cotton crop in these warlike times," interrupted Bainbridge. "What is the condition of the gun-cotton crop?"—Town Topics.

Paradoxical.

Hubbard—There's something paradoxical about the bill for those pillows you bought. Wife—What do you mean? Hubbard—Why, it proves that down is going up.—Boston Courier.

THE ANCIENT BETROTHAL.

Was a Solemn Ceremony—Wedding and Engagement Rings.

Wedding and betrothal rings were supposed in olden times to possess a saving grace and an intrinsic value, a belief that still lingers in the minds of some. The wedding ring, as we now possess it, or rather the plainness of "the plain gold ring," as it is often lovingly called, belongs to modern times. Even in the last century it was not considered unsuitable that a ring consecrated to the service of binding man and woman in an indissoluble union should be set with precious stones or be treated artistically.

The early history of the wedding ring is not easy to trace, as it was apt to be confused with the betrothal ring, formerly the most important of the two. We must not forget that in the days of our forefathers the betrothal was the great ceremony, and marriage only a ratification of the contract. A spouse was then a betrothed person, and to espouse was to be betrothed. The ceremony of betrothal or espousal, as the contract of a future "eternal bond of love," was performed with all possible solemnity. The reasons for formalizing an engagement in this way was doubtless that in times of violence and disregard of law the church wisely protected the weaker party—the woman—by throwing a sanctity round the betrothal, and punished any violation of the contract with excommunication. A betrothal service was used, which is still observed in a few of the French and Italian rituals, and, indeed, the first part of the marriage service of the Church of England down to the woman's answer: "I will," is the old betrothal service.

The action for breach of promise of marriage is probably a relic of the old ceremony of betrothal treated by law as the breach of a contract, a contract which can now usually only be inferred. In old times the breach of promise was as often as not on the lady's side, for girls were espoused when very young, and their fathers obtained "fother-lean" or money, was supposed to be used for their education and maintenance. There were greedy fathers in those days, who, after obtaining the money, would quarrel with the spouse, and, breaking off the engagement, would betroth their daughters to other suitors. This was so frequently done that the church at last decreed that the price of the wife should be paid on the wedding day instead of at the espousals. Before this was made law, however, the betrothal ring, which was given when the dowry was settled, was the one visible thing that bound the contracting parties together. The wife had other proofs of her marriage besides the wedding ring, but the betrothal ring, unlike the engaged ring of to-day, which is a mere gift from a lover, was legal evidence of the contract. One has read in old ballads of lovers who wooed their ladies "with brooch and ring," though the brooch, perhaps, was only a free will offering of affection.—Philadelphia Ledger.

FLAGGED THE MOON.

Conductor Thought It Was the Headlight of Another Train.

"Say, you want to hear this story," said the railroad conductor. "It's a good one on Joe Gibson, one of our fellows. Joe's a good deal of a kiddier himself, but the boys are having their turn at him now. It happened up in the Trenton yards a few nights ago. Joe's train was to be side-tracked at Nice avenue. Well, when the train arrived at that point Joe jumped off and ran ahead to the switch. He threw the switch over, and waved his lantern to the engineer to come ahead. The next minute Joe happened to glance due east down the track, and he nearly dropped his lantern with fright. There was the great round headlight of another engine beaming down upon him on the very track his train was about to take. Recovering himself, he swung his lantern furiously, at the same time shouting: 'Pull out, pull out! Don't you see her coming?' The engineer jammed her up, and stopped short. 'What's the matter?' he shouted. Joe had gathered some new knowledge in the meantime, and his expression changed completely. He didn't say anything, but simply gave the signal to 'go ahead.' When the engineer pulled into the track he saw the full moon climbing over the track dead ahead of him. Joe had simply flagged the moon, that's all."—Philadelphia Record.

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Bulletin Financier. Bulletin Commercial.

Mardi, 24 mai 1898.

COMPTOIR D'ÉCHANGES (CLEARING-HOUSE) DE LA NOUVELLE-ORLEANS.

Table with exchange rates for various currencies and commodities.

RENTES MONÉTAIRES.

Table listing monetary rents and interest rates.

MONNAIES.

Table listing various currencies and their values.

LETTRES.

Table listing letters and related financial instruments.

CHANGES.

Table listing exchange rates for various locations.

VENTES À LA BOURSE DE LA NOUVELLE-ORLEANS.

Table listing market transactions and prices.

ACTIONS ET MONS.

Table listing shares and bonds.

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Short rib sides, Long clear sides, Short clear sides, etc.

Table listing prices for various types of meat.

WINE ET LIQUEURS.

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