

A STRANGE CEREMONY.

THE TRIBULATIONS OF A WHITE COUPLE IN THE CONGO.

How the Affair was Conducted by the Principals and Their Friends—The Elaborate Preparations Made for the Event—Some Strange Customs.

Six years ago a small party of white persons wended their way by canoe to the house of a French official in the French Congo. Two of the party intended to be married. Being Americans, both imagining that they would be able to procure a license quite easily, not knowing how much red tape it takes to satisfy France. Their only witness was a French lady, the teacher at the mission school. The French commandant soon explained that first of all the consent of the Governor of the colony was necessary. To gain this consent the application must be signed by four witnesses, all men over twenty-five years of age. Soon the witnesses were procured, and they testified to the existence of the intended bride and groom. So the paper was drawn up, signed, and left at the post to be sent to the Governor.

The wedding party returned and waited. A little over six weeks passed, when notice arrived that the license could not be granted, inasmuch as the birth certificate of the contracting parties and the consent of their parents would be necessary. In case their parents were dead, their marriage and death certificates would be required. There was nothing to do but to write home and wait again. The documents which the expectant bridegroom required arrived after about four months, but those of the bride did not come until ten months after the first application was made for the license, her father living in the wilds of western Nebraska, seventy miles from anywhere.

After all the papers were at hand the Commandant visited the bridegroom and requested him to go to his office to arrange everything, so that, after a delay of two weeks the ceremony might be performed. These two weeks would be needed to give every one living in the neighborhood a chance to dip the news of the approaching marriage, and in case any one knew of any impediment in the way, to enable him to inform the government. For convenience a paper was nailed up at the post announcing the facts. Another was posted at the house of the couple to be married, it being the only other public place in that vicinity. Since the natives could not read the paper had to be explained every time one of them saw it.

At last the wedding day dawned, a Saturday being chosen for the occasion. Everything was in readiness the day before, so that there could be an early start on this eventful day. The canoe, about thirty feet long and four feet broad, had been fixed up with an awning from sailcloth, easy chairs being placed for the wedding party of four—bride, groom, bridesmaid, and an intimate friend who acted as best man. The natives (fourteen in number) who paddled the canoe were seated on planks fastened across the canoe. These men were all dressed in white loin cloths and white shirts, and all were very anxious to work in the canoe on this occasion. In the bow rice and fish were carried for the diner of the crew.

About 5 o'clock, an hour before sunrise, the canoe left the station. The groom had taken it upon himself to steer. The voyage was quiet and peaceful until someone shouted "N'Phuboo." Everyone looked, but the hippopotamus had already disappeared, to rise again at a distance. The water was without a ripple, and the trees were mirrored in its depths. The banks on both sides seemed adorned for a feast, so many beautiful colors were to be seen in the trees. Everywhere the cries of birds and monkeys were to be heard, the rising sun disturbed the sleepers. Often the howl of the hyena made discord in these melodies. After travelling about nine miles a place called Pilla N'ambia (Thirty Steamers) was reached. Here the river widens into a lake three miles across. On this morning the water was like glass, although its waves had often swamped canoes. An hour's strong pull across this lake, and the river narrowed again. Here they say the monkey's used to cross, forming a bridge by hanging to each other's tails. That must have been in those good old times when people were afraid of Africa.

The tide going down strongly soon brought our wedding party to their destination, a little after 9 A. M. A German merchant had invited them to his house and also prepared to spread the wedding breakfast. He, being the oldest among the Europeans, claimed the right to give away the bride. After they had rested a little and were joined by the necessary witnesses, they all proceeded to the French post, followed by a crowd of Africans who wanted to see the strange performance. At the post everything was unusually nice. One could see that they had been very busy preparing to do justice to this grand occasion. Even a new carpet graced the floor. Monsieur the Commandant received the bridal party at the door and took them to their different seats, and chairs were placed for the couple to be married at the foot of the table, while the representative of France took the head. The wit-

nesses and others were seated at the sides.

After all were seated, Monsieur proceeded with the ceremony. He read very rapidly, but it was over half an hour before he came to the momentous question and asked the bride and groom to say "oui." They said "oui," and then he asked them to sign a large document. After the signatures of the witnesses, followed congratulations, and all was over until seated around the table at the German factory. Ten white people partook of this breakfast, which could not be surp used in tropical Africa. About 3 p. m. the canoe was ready and all the white people came to the river beach to see the newly married couple off. The bride and groom returned with them. Throwing old shoes and rice after the canoe was now the order of the day. The return voyage at first was as pleasant as the morning journey, only the sky was a little cloudy and a tornado was coming up. After passing the big lake the clouds began to look darker, the lightning flashed on all sides, and the river seemed to boil, the water was so rough. Soon the roaring of the wind and rushing of the coming rain told of danger.

The canoe was out in the middle of the river when the wind struck it. There was nothing to do but to try to reach the shelter of the shore. Birds were fluttering in all directions seeking a place of rest. The bridegroom was at the helm again, and only his presence of mind saved the whole party from a watery grave. He turned the canoe and shouted, "Pull away boys!" The waves were rushing in, making the work a good deal harder, but after a short time, which seemed very long, though, the shelter of the mangroves was reached. Here in comparative safety they waited until the storm had spent its fury. The natives dipped the water from the canoe, and after a delay of nearly an hour all were ready to go on. Every one was thoroughly drenched, but thankful that it was not worse. About 9 o'clock the home was reached, and the day ended in a quite and enjoyable evening.

So ended the first European wedding in the French Congo.

SEEING THE COMMODORE.

Short Chapter Out of Experience of a Newspaper Reporter.

"One night, some twenty-odd years ago, and when I had not been very long on the paper," said an old newspaper reporter. "I was sent up to ask Commodore Vanderbilt for some information on certain points relating to the New York Central Railroad. The Commodore lived then in the fine old house in Washington place, the house in which he died. The servant that let me in took me into the parlour by a door that opened into the hall near the front of the room, and left me there. Presently the Commodore came in by a door opening into the hall near the rear of the room. He had on a rather old-fashioned suit of clothes, including a frock coat with pretty long skirts; he wore an old-fashioned stand-up collar with high sideboards, that somehow seemed especially suited to him. He was a stately looking gentleman, with more of kindness than of austerity in his bearing, as he stood over there on the other side of the room looking at me and asking what I wanted, but still his manner was perfectly emotional, and I couldn't even have guessed whether he was going to tell me what I wanted to know or not, though I thought the chances were a shade against it. But he asked me to come up to his room, and he led the way himself.

"The Commodore's room was on the second floor, at the rear of the house; the door was opposite the head of the stairs. It had been at the front of the house it would have been called a hall bedroom; but it was bigger than that, and I should think that it was twelve or fourteen feet square. There was a fireplace on one side, and in the centre of the room there was a table topped desk with papers lying about on it, and a broad, thin box of cigars. The room appeared to be a sort of personal office of the Commodore's.

"He sat down himself in a big comfortable chair by the side of the fireplace and gave me a chair by the desk. He told me to open the box and take a cigar. I asked him the questions I had come to ask, and he gave me the desired information. Then he went on talking on his own account, in a calm, self-contained sort of way, about the Central road. It seemed as though his feeling for the road was one of affection. The four tracking had just been begun, and the Commodore spoke particularly of that. He said that if he could live to see the Central four tracked from New York to Buffalo he would be satisfied; that it would then be the greatest railroad in the world; and he spoke of other things about the road, speaking always in a way that was quiet and dignified, but at the same time as pleasant and agreeable as could be imagined.

"Everything that he said was of interest—some of it was of importance. I went back to the office and wrote out the interview. Next morning I had the great pleasure of reading it in print. It was a success, made so by the gracious, kindly old Commodore."

A Woman's Heart.

Derangement of the heart and nerves in woman is followed by various nervous disorders, such as Hysteria, Melancholia, Neuralgia, Sleeplessness, Palpitation and Pains and Aches in various parts of the body. In such cases strengthen the heart and build up the nervous system by the use of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills.

Windsor Salt. Purest and Best for Table and Dairy. No adulteration. Never cakes.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

IS THE TRUTH CONCERNING JOHN GIBBONS, OF EAST LONDON.

He was tortured with the Pains of Sciatic Rheumatism—Tried Doctors, all Sorts of Medicine and Went to the Hospital in Vain—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills Cured Him When all Else had Failed.

From the London Advertiser.

There are two things in this world which Mr. John Gibbons, a resident of Queen's Avenue East, will henceforth place implicit confidence in. One is the judgment of his wife and the other the curative qualities of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. In his case the two went hand in hand. Mrs. Gibbons thought of the remedy, the pills did the rest, and today Mr. Gibbons is a well man where last fall he was virtually a cripple. An Advertiser reporter called at the house of Mr. Gibbons, to whom he told the object of his visit, and was cordially invited in. The reporter had no sooner got comfortably seated when Mr. Gibbons went into an adjoining room. The sound of clinking bottles floated through the half open door and when Mr. Gibbons reappeared he had in his arms a whole basket of bottles—all he has to show for many and many a hard earned dollar spent in useless drugs. As Mr. Gibbons was busy showing the bottles and decanting upon the impotency of the medicines they had contained, the reporter had abundant opportunity of marking the personal appearance of the man. His speech betrays his English birth, and his face still bears the marks of suffering, but his frame is erect, his step light and elastic, and when he tells you that he can work, run, or jump with any man, you cannot help but believe him. He is 29 years of age and was born in Bow Road, Stratford, England. He came to Canada in 1882 and located at Galt where he is well and favorably known. He worked for the Hon. Mr. Young, member of parliament, for a long time and seven years ago he married Miss Alice Mann, also of Galt. After Mr. Gibbons removed to London he settled down near the car shops and did very well, always having plenty of work and always having the strength to do it. He cared nothing about a wetting until one day a year ago he took an acute attack of sciatic rheumatism following wet feet. "I lay down on this floor," said Mr. Gibbons, in telling his story, "night and day suffering terrible agony. I could not get up a step and my wife had to help me up from the floor. I felt the pain in my back first. It then spread to my left hip and got into my hips. Doctors came here to see me. They gave me prescriptions but none of them seemed to do me any good. The neighbors could hear me all over Queen's Avenue when I would get an attack of the pains. Last fall I was taken out of this place in a back and taken to the hospital. I remained there about three weeks and the doctors did what they could for me but could not give me any relief. At the end of three weeks I came home again suffering as much as ever. My wife got hold of a pamphlet which told me a number of remarkable cures by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and we determined to try them. I took about three boxes and felt myself getting a little easier. I took thirteen boxes altogether, and it is over two months since I felt the last suggestion of pain."

"Do you feel that you are entirely cured?" asked the reporter. "Yes, sir, I can go out and do a day's work just as well as ever I could. I feel perfectly strong and have a good appetite." "No, I don't want another attack of sickness like that," said Mr. Gibbons, as he lighted the reporter to the door. Mrs. Gibbons was not at home on the occasion of the reporter's first visit. Subsequently he called on her and received an entire confirmation of Mr. Gibbons' story. "He was home all last summer," said Mrs. Gibbons, "and last August the pains were so severe as to bring him down on his knees, and to save himself he could not get up. I had to lift him off the floor many a time. He seemed powerless. The bottles he showed you had almost all of them been repeatedly filled so that the number of bottles is no criterion of the amount of medicine taken. Before he took the pills," concluded Mrs. Gibbons, "I thought my husband would never be able to stand upright again. But now," she added in parting, "he is as well as ever he was."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills create new blood, build up the nerves and thus drive disease from the system. In hundreds of cases they have cured after other medicines had failed, thus establishing the claim that they are a marvel among the triumphs of modern medical science. The genuine Pink Pills are sold only in boxes, bearing the full trade mark, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." Protect yourself from imposition by refusing any pill that does not bear the registered trade mark around the box.

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WANTED Old established wholesale House wants one or two honest and industrious representatives for this section. Can pay a handsome salary. \$12.00 a week to start with. DRAWER 29, Brantford, Ont.

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RESIDENCE at Rothesay for sale or to rent for the Summer months. The pleasantly situated house known as the Titus property about one and a half miles from Rothesay Station and within two minutes walk of the Kennebec Falls. Rent reasonable. Apply to H. G. Fenety, Barrister-at-Law, Pugsley Building. 24-25

tree taking root in a barren rock is also unusual in California, on account of the long, dry summers, during which young sprouts usually perish unless there is considerable moisture in the soil.

The exact location of this botanical curiosity is a few hundred feet east of the trail to the top of Tamalpais. The general appearance of the tree is most unusual and undoubtedly it is very old. At first glance it looks like an oak, but a most unusual one. The upper branches are twisted and turned in all directions and a large portion of them are dead. In reality the tree looks like those in the Dore illustrations of Dante's "Inferno."

An examination of the tree and surroundings shows that the boulder is one of the largest ones in the vicinity and cannot weigh less than 500 tons. The location of the tree is almost exactly in the middle of the stone and about five feet from the end of the split. This rift in the rock is about fifteen inches long and at one end is only a few inches wide. At the end where the tree is it is at least three feet to prove that it was the tree that caused the split there is a crack in one of the halves of the boulder showing that the force of the growing roots was so much that it cracked the rock where it could not move it.

Miss Eastwood, a botanist of the Academy of Sciences, gave her opinion that the strange natural curiosity was the only one of its kind in the state. She says that in all her studies she has never seen its like here, although in localities where there are summer rains the phenomenon is not unusual. And yet then under those conditions she never heard of a laurel growing as the one in Mill Valley does. In Miss Eastwood's opinion there must have been a small rift in the boulder to begin with. Possibly it was not tight enough to hold water. In the fall of the year the seed of the laurel blew into it and in the spring of the year came to life. The walls of the rift then acted as sunshades and also kept the water from being evaporated too rapidly, so that the young shoot was able to struggle through the long summer until the winter rains came. Or it may be that there was an unusually rainy summer that gave the tree its start in life. After the tree was a year old it was unable to take care of itself, and then showed its ingratitude to the rock that had protected it. —San Francisco Call.

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It's a Poor Rule, Etc. "Willie, didn't I ask you to make less noise?" said Mrs. Still at dinner table. "Yes, you did, mamma." "Well, I will have to ask you again." "Remember, mamma, you told me it was impolite to ask for anything twice at the table."

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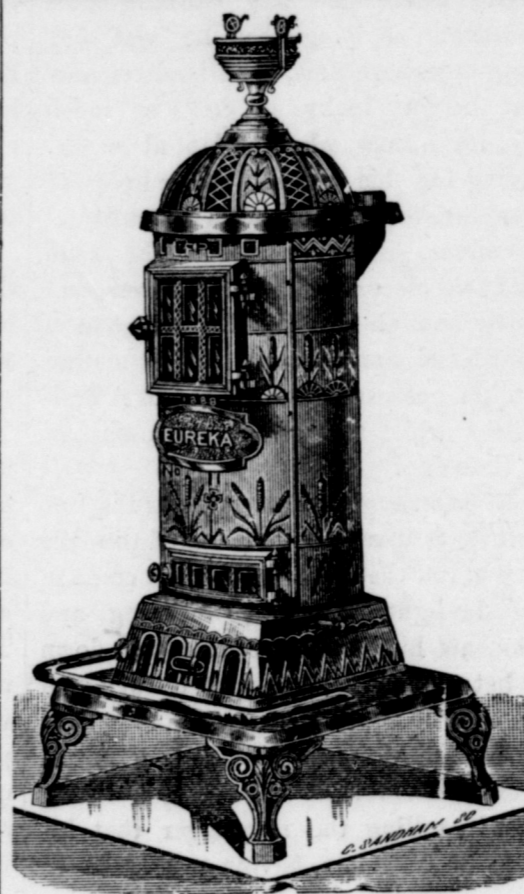
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