

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

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THE DALLES OREGON

THE STORMY PETREL.

Queer Superstitions of Old Sailors About the Bird.

One of the best known of the sea birds is the stormy petrel. It is oftenest seen during storms flying above the waves in search of the shellfish and other small animals that are brought to the surface by the tempest, says St. Nicholas. The sailors call petrels "Mother Carey's chickens," and do not view them with much favor, owing to their being constant companions of storms. "Jack" thinks that rough weather may be expected when he sees petrels about and is not quite sure that they do not in some way cause the tempest. When the bird is on the lookout for its prey it seems to walk on the water. Hence the seamen of olden time, in allusion to the Apostle Peter's walking on the water, called the bird petrel, from the Latin Petrus, "Little Peter."

So far from the sailor being superstitious as to the capture of another kind of petrel, the cape pigeon, which is of black-and-white color and about the size of a tame pigeon, I have known "Jack" to take a hand occasionally in capturing them as a bit of recreation during a dog-watch.

In southern latitudes the cape pigeons follow a ship in thousands. A common bottle cork is tied to the end of a piece of thread and trailed astern so that the cork touches the water. This gives the required tautness to the thread.

As the birds fly in clouds from side to side astern some of them constantly strike the thread with their wings and the resistance is enough to turn them over it, when the thread is wrapped around the wing and the bird is hauled on board. In this manner I have seen hundreds caught in a day.

On one occasion a clipper ship carrying passengers to India captured pigeons by hundreds and the surgeon by some mischance succeeded in entangling a stormy petrel.

Now, the doctor was an enthusiastic naturalist and what to the sailors is known as a "land-lubber"—that is, he was on his first voyage. The doctor at once took the specimen to his cabin and made preparations to skin and preserve it. In hot haste a deputation of seamen, headed by the old gray-haired sail-maker, came aft with a request that the petrel be set at liberty, saying that otherwise the ship and all on board would surely suffer.

The doctor, somewhat surprised, intended to set the bird free, but his enthusiasm as a naturalist prevailed over the superstitious warning and when the sailors had disappeared the bird was added to his collection. The fact soon became known forward among the men and the doctor was regarded with black looks by the crew for the remainder of the voyage.

In the course of time the good ship anchored in the Hugli river and that day at dinner the doctor suddenly died.

There was a gathering of the sailors around the windlass that dog-watch and the doctor's sudden death was attributed by the superstitious sailors to his slaughter of the stormy petrel.

Large Foreign Cities.

Of cities with more than one hundred thousand population England has thirty, Germany twenty-four, France and Russia each twelve, Italy ten, Austria-Hungary six, Spain five, Belgium, the Scandinavian states, Rumania and the Balkan islands each four, the Netherlands three, Portugal two; the total in Europe being one hundred and sixteen great cities. Asia has one hundred and five, China having fifty-three and British India thirty. In Africa there are seven, in America forty, of which the United States has twenty-six; South America nine. Australia has only two large cities.

Face and Figure

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MIDWINTER FAIR.

CALIFORNIA MIDWINTER INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION.—DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION.

(Weekly Circular Letter—No. 8.)

With the single exception of the Administration building, which needs a full week's work before it will be completed, the five main buildings of the California Midwinter International Exposition are practically finished. Still, it has been found impossible to open the Exposition in all its departments on Jan. 1. When the projectors of this industrial enterprise took advantage of the glorious midwinter weather in California they did not expect that the wintry winds from the shore of Lake Michigan, and the mountains of snow between that point and this, would array themselves in opposition to their plans. This, however, has proven to be the case, and hundreds of carloads of exhibits which were to come from the Columbian Exposition to stand on dress parade in Golden Gate park have been seriously delayed by the weather. There has been great difficulty experienced in getting cars to load goods on at Chicago as fast as they were ready, and when they had once been started westward, a series of obstacles had to be overcome until, even though the buildings in San Francisco are practically ready for their reception, the bulk of the exhibits which are to be made by foreign nations have not yet arrived.

It has been found necessary, therefore, to postpone the formal ceremonies of opening the Exposition for a few days, or until everything is in place. On the first day of January, however, an informal opening occurs. The flags of all nations will fly from the flag poles on the Exposition buildings and in the grounds, there will be music and general gala day effects, but the "day of days," the day when San Francisco shall be a perfect sea of bunting, when her people shall turn out en masse, when an extra legal holiday shall be declared and when all California shall join in the great ceremony of the opening of this great midwinter festival—that day will come a little later on.

Quite a number of the concessional features of the Exposition are all in readiness and will be in full blast on Jan. 1. The great Firth wheel begins its revolutions with the New Year; the lions and tigers in the wild animal arena will roar to New Year audiences; the Santa Barbara sea lion will roll and roar in the great tanks that have been provided for them; the forty-nine mining camp will receive calls in true frontier fashion; beer and pleasure will flow at the Heidelberg castle; the Hawaiian cyclorama will be open to the public; the curious ones can do down into the Colorado gold mine; and even the great electric tower will be almost completed. But this word "almost" will be changed into "quite" in its application to everything projected in connection with the Exposition before the grand opening day comes on, and when that day comes there will be spread out before the visiting multitude the most complete and most picturesque exposition that the western sun has ever shone upon.

Speaking of the great Firth wheel suggests mention of a very interesting incident which took place in connection with its construction the other day. During a temporary lull in the work of putting up the spiderlike spokes of this wheel, a man was observed to clamber up in the mass of timbers surrounding the base of the superstructure. He was at first supposed to be a workman, and no special attention was paid him. Presently, however, he clambered out on one of the lower spokes. The superintendent of construction, catching sight of him, asked what he wanted up there. The adventurer made no response, but continued his ascent, working his way inside the periphery with catlike agility. The superintendent ordered him down. The only answer he got was an invitation to come and fetch him. He kept on climbing, and where the periphery has not been placed he had to slide down the big spokes until he reached the channel iron. Crossing on these to the next spoke, he worked out to the periphery, and proceeded as before.

By this time quite a crowd had gathered, watching the progress of this daring fellow, 120 feet from the ground. He was repeatedly warned to look out for himself, but showed himself abundantly able to do so. Finally he reached the highest point, and, standing at full length, gave an exulting yell, which was answered by a group of friends near the volcano building. Of course he came down the other way, and thus made the first revolution of the great Firth wheel. On reaching the ground he disclosed his identity, and was recognized as a sailor and rigger. He said he had made the trip to settle a bet that he would make the first trip around this great rotary construction.

One of the sensations of the Exposition will be the famous diver, Kohana Maka, whose record as a long-distance swimmer, deep diver and shark hunter surpasses that of all aquatic wonders of the great Pacific. It is Kohana Maka who has kept alive the old shark-hunting custom of the early kings of Hawaii. In former days it was the custom of royal sportsmen to go to sea in their war canoes or catamaran, taking along a large bowl of chopped enemies. This bowl was placed over the water, and fragments of hashed Kanaka were thrust through a hole in the bottom of the bowl, thus attracting schools of man-eating sharks. When the sharks became thick around the boats a native king would dive in among them, knife in hand, and, coming up under the school, would stab one as he arose. This is one of the things that Kohana Maka does in these days. There will be no sharks in the little lake within the Hawaiian enclosure at the Midwinter Exposition, but there will be ample room for diving and for Kohana and other great swimmers to exercise. Four women and three men, all experts, form the little company of swimmers, headed by Kohana Maka. They will not only illustrate the wonderful aquatic feats for which the islanders are famous, but they announce themselves as ready to meet all comers in any form of aquatic sports.

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