

The Daily Astorian

(13)

VOL. XXV, NO. 68.

ASTORIA, OREGON, SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1886.

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STRANGE VISIONS.

Remarkable Outbreak of Religious Enthusiasm.

A remarkable outbreak of religious hallucination occurred at San Salvador, Bahamas Island, this year. About January last a report was out that a young girl had seen visions and was under some influence not belonging to this world. Her excitement soon communicated itself to others, and in the course of a few weeks some twenty young girls were affected. They then organized religious meetings, and much excitement was caused.

I went once to see what took place at these meetings. About fifty people sat round in a room singing, clapping hands, and stamping the feet, keeping time to a kind of monotonous chant. The girls who saw visions were standing in the center, sometimes walking up and down. They had a vacant kind of stare. Gradually the singing quickened, until at last it became fast and furious. Then the girls would dance, shout, and bark like dogs.

After twenty minutes of this they would fall down with a shriek. Their struggles, cries, and foaming at the mouth were dreadful to see, and in many cases it took four or five men to hold them still. After the fit was over they would lie exhausted for about one hour, then, when they came to, they gave very detailed accounts of the visions they had seen. A great deal of these visions was, of course, nonsense, but one thing was remarkable—they spoke of people doing things many miles away from the place. Upon inquiry it was found in some cases that what they had seen corresponded exactly with the events.

One most remarkable feature in this outbreak was that it was not confined to one spot. Almost simultaneously in every settlement on the island (the island is forty-five miles long and twelve broad in places) similar outbreaks occurred. Girls living at distances of five or ten miles from the scene of the "outlet meetings," as they were called, would be seized. Being seized with kind of frenzy, they would run, as if by inspiration, to the spot where the rest were assembled, no matter how far.

Most of those attacked with the fits were people who belonged to the Baptist society. Consequently their visions were not of the Madonna, but of the distinctive predestination doctrines of their sect. Very glowing accounts were given of the various punishments and tortures reserved for the wicked in hell, and they were most liberal in dispensing these punishments among their friends.

Up and down the island about 400 or 500 people were seized, and it was at first thought it was a kind of epidemic of hysteria. In a few cases girls of highly respectable character were seized, and, although they did not see visions, yet for weeks they would have fits daily, and such was their superhuman strength that I have seen a young girl of 16 struggle out of the grasp of four strong men. The outbreak lasted from January to July, and at one time it was feared that it would lead to serious consequences, for all the people who gave credence to the visions neglected work and abandoned themselves to holding meetings day and night for singing, shouting, barking, and listening to accounts of the visions seen.

In the daytime, especially on Sundays, they had processions with banners. This led to some bad feeling, and in a few cases the law had to be appealed to in the interests of peace. It was a singular thing that, although they organized themselves into a sect, and all who disbelieved in the visions were "heretics," yet they showed the utmost courtesy and good-will toward the church, but toward their own particular denomination and the various other sects they displayed great animosity. The excitement has died out now, and they have ceased to exist as a sect.

P. BARROW MATTHEWS, Rector, San Salvador, Nassau Diocese.—(London Times.)

Authority on Eggs.

Little Tommy Curtis, four years old, lives in the suburbs of Madison, Wis., and his mamma keeps chickens. The other day, in order to show what he could do to a room full of company, he ransacked the hen's nests, securing two eggs—one of ordinary size and the other extremely large. With an air of importance he marched into the room and exhibited the result of his "prowess."

"Dear me," said a lady, "what an astonishing large egg. Tommy, what kind of a hen was it that laid this one?"

"'Twas no hen," said Tommy, authoritatively. "That's a rooster's egg."

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Gems of Thought.

Neglect no opportunity of doing good, nor check the desire of doing it by a vain fear of what may happen.—(Atterbury.)

Seldom shall one see in rich families that athletic soundness and vigor of constitution which are seen in cottages, where nature is cook and necessity caterer.—(South.)

It is a good thing to laugh, at any rate; and if a straw can tickle a man, it is an instrument of happiness. Beasts can weep when they suffer, but they cannot laugh.—(Dryden.)

He deserves disappointment who gives with the hope of return. The object of conferring a benefit should be the good of the receiver, without regard to any collateral advantage to ourselves.—(Seneca.)

It may be remarked, for the comfort of honest poverty, that avarice reigns most in those who have but few good qualities to recommend them. This is a weed that will only grow in a barren soil.—(Hughes.)

The most censorious are generally the least judicious, who, having nothing to recommend themselves, will be finding fault with others. No man envies the merit of another, who has enough of his own.—(Rule of Life.)

Compliments of congratulation are always kindly taken, and cost one nothing but pen, ink and paper. I consider them as draughts upon good breeding, where the exchange is always greatly in favor of the drawer.—(Chesterfield.)

The first in conversation is truth, the next, good sense, the third, good humor, and the fourth, wit.—(Swift.)

Where necessity ends, desire and curiosity begin, and no sooner are we supplied with everything nature can demand than we sit down to contrive artificial appetites.—(Johnson.)

Where They Go to. "It wasn't three days ago that I put three penholders and three blotting pads on this desk, and not one is to be found now."

It was a post-office official and he referred to the writing-desk in the corridor. "What becomes of 'em?" asked the reporter.

"You don't mean to say that we have people mean enough to steal a half-penny blotting pad?"

"But I do. I see a dozen cases of it a week."

"Women, mostly. And when it isn't a woman it's a business man. Now, I'm going to stock up the desk again, and you hang around here for awhile and see what you can see."

Three penholders, each supplied with a new pen, and three fresh pads of blotting paper were laid out, and the watcher took his seat on a window-sill. In about five minutes a young man with a brisk air rushed up to the desk, directed a postal card, and knocked one of the penholders off on the floor as he rushed off. The second corner was also a man, and he picked up the pen, directed a letter with it, gave a quick glance around him and pocketed one of the blotters. The third was a woman, who sat on her glasses, wrote a postal card, and pocketed a penholder. Then a boy lunched up and stole another, and between two business men who used the other pen the second blotter was pocketed. This left only one penholder and one blotter. After seven or eight people had used them, a woman with widow's weeds on directed a mourning envelope, stamped it and rolled the penholder up in the pad and pocketed both; regardless of who might be watching. She was not yet out of the building when a man rushed up to the desk, found nothing to write with, and pounded the walnut with his fist and growled out:

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