

## THE BROTHER IN BLACK.

Peculiarities, Oddities and Eccentricities of the Negro.

Superstitious and Happy. With No Thought of the Morrow—A Few Reminiscences.

(From Wednesday's Daily)

The person born and reared in the North has very little conception of the peculiarities, oddities and eccentricities of the negro as he is found in the far South. There, along with that other indigenous tropical growth, the alligator, the negro is found in all his race purity and strength—of odor. For many years the writer lived where the blacks outnumbered the whites in the ratio of three to two, therefore his opportunities for studying their race characteristics were ample. It is as natural for the negro to worship one day and fall from grace the next, love ardently one day and be indifferent the next, pray and shout at campmeeting until 3 o'clock in the morning and steal chickens on his way home, as is his appetite for watermelons, which appetite has never been questioned.

The negro worships with a blind faith which is to be admired. While seated in the old slave market in the plaza of the historic old city of St. Augustine one morning several years ago, I overheard a somewhat heated argument between two negroes who were seated near me on what is called the Spanish sea wall. The truthfulness of the Bible was being seriously questioned by one, while it was being as strongly defended by the other.

"Now look heah, Bill," said the unbeliever, "du yo bleeve all what de Bible says?"

"I sho'r duz," was William's reply. With that air of disgust common to infidels, the other said: "Bill, duz yo mean to tell me dat yo bleeve dat story 'bout Jonah swallerin de whale?"

"Well," said Bill as he scratched his wool as if hunting for an idea, "I uster done hab some doubt 'bout dat passage, but I'se done cided to bleeve all what de Bible say, and dat 'clodes de whale sorv. Yo see, hit am dis way: Some of dese white foks is h—' fo' fish."

The most fervent prayers I have ever heard uttered came from black lips. Negroes are very responsive when in prayer, the voice of the leader often being completely drowned by the grunts, amens and hallelujahs from the other pews. I once knew an old Baptist minister from Boston who was spending the winter in Florida for his wife's health. His wife had remained in Boston. One Sunday night the old minister dropped into a negro church and was invited to lead the congregation in prayer, which he did in most stertorian tones. Responses were many and fervent. Finally the leader in an exceptionally loud outburst said "Oh Lord, wilt thou curtail Satan in all his works?" And from a gray haired deacon whose soul was a well spring of devotion came the unique response: "Yes, Lord, do; cut de old son of a gun's tail smack smooove off."

I said that the negroes are not steadfast in love, and the assertion is based on close observation. A negro named John Hardy had by taking the life of a fellow, forfeited his claims on life. He had been in jail two months previous to his trial and sentence and during that period his wife, Hannah, had called regularly each week to cheer her liege lord in his confinement. But when John was sentenced to die, Hannah's visits ceased, and although two more months elapsed before he was hung, she never came near the jail. Execution day arrived and the writer, in company with the sheriff, went to the jail early in the forenoon. I was admitted to the cell with the doomed man whom I found to be fairly intelligent. I questioned him closely relative to the condition of his mind and thoughts

at that time. He said he was not afraid to die, but added: "I'se worritin 'bout my two little children an' 'bout how da's gwine ter git 'nuff ter lib on. Yo see hit am dis way. Ebery day dat I was sentenced to die, my wife Hannah done tuck up wid dat goudfonuthin nigger Gawdge Washington Johnson, an' I know dat she's gwine ter marry him as soon as I's dead." An hour later John dropped into eternity a distance of seven feet. When life was extinct we carried the body outside to a bench where hundreds of negroes gazed upon it. Leaning on the arm of George Washington Johnson came Hannah. At the suggestion of the sheriff I passed my hat among the white men present and secured a collection of several dollars which I turned over to the widow, telling her at the same time to give her husband decent burial. Hannah "curchied" as she wrapped the silver up in a red handkerchief and looking rather proudly at the sheriff said: "De county done kill John, an, de county can bury him." With that she turned away and went to a store where she expended my collection in a dress for herself and a coat for George Washington Johnson. The hanging took place on Friday, and in the Sunday issue of my paper appeared the following:

"Married last night at the Amazon Grace Baptist church by Rev. Gus Walters, George Washington Johnson and Hannah Hardy, relic of the late John Hardy. No flowers."

In New Orleans the dock extends for miles along the levee and during the fall and winter seasons it is not uncommon to see nearly the entire length of the dock covered with huge bales of cotton piled several feet high. While sauntering along the dock one bright morning I came upon a negro lying between two bales of cotton. Thinking at first the man was dead, I touched him with my foot. He was not dead. Slowly raising himself on one elbow he turned toward me the most dejected and pitiful face I ever beheld. Abject woe was depicted in every feature and on every line of his face was the trace of great mental agony. My compassion was touched, and in the most kindly tones at my command I inquired the cause of his troubles. Slowly raising himself to a sitting posture he said:

"Hit am dis way. Two weeks ago Sam Green, what runs de grocery store up to de corner ob Ponchertrain and Camp streets, done bet me two dollahs dat I couldn't swallow an aig widout breakin ob de shell. I tuck de bet and swallower de aig, fool 'at I was. An' now yo see, if I moove aroun' peart like, de aig will break an' de shell will cut de intestaments ob my stomach all ter pieces, an' if I keep still annuder week dar' I be a young Shanghai rooster a' clawin ob de innards outen me."

And with a groan that touched my heart, the unhappy man again resumed his recumbent position between the cotton bales. E. J. WHITE.

Sour Dough Letter Heads for sale at the Nugget office.

We wish the people on the creeks to try the Pavilion grill and lunch room for a good, home cooked dinner; \$1. Next to the Palace Grand -26

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On Ben Levy's lot where formerly stood the Board of Trade building, is a natural basin several feet in depth, which, previous to the erection of the building recently destroyed was filled with dry saw dust as a precaution against the chilling blasts of Boreas. The fire came and several thousand gallons of water were squirted promiscuously over and around that basin into which the water ran, raising all the saw dust to the surface. Later the dust froze, but owing to the depth of the water, the latter has not frozen solidly and now Levy has on his lot a lake of fine clear water. In case of covering that portion of the lot with a building it will be necessary to pump out the water unless it is decided to utilize it for plunge baths.

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THE LONDON—Dry goods and Millinery. Fancy Dress Goods, Trimmings, Laces, Parasols, etc. Silk, Waists and Under-skirts. 3rd St., Opposite Nugget office.

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NO. 8 COOK STOVE, cast iron; perfect order. ent. 14x16. 10-ounce, 5-foot wall; almost new. Sundry lot of carpenter's tools, blankets, etc. Inquire F. W. Clayton, secretary Board of Trade, A. C. Office Building.

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LOST Friday evening, between Last Chance and Gold Bottom, lady's black dress and pair of dog double-trees. Leave at Nugget office; \$5 reward.

LOST—Jan. 16th, gray husky dog, short tail; leather strap on neck when last seen. Leave at this office.

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