Christmas On Crusoe's Isle

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ROBINSON CRUSOE.

ONE Christmas morning not many years ago I found myself up a tree in Crusoe's island. I was hunting meat for my Christmas dinner shortly after daybreak that morning, and as the most abundant supply was promised by the peccaries, or wild hogs, that ranged the island, I had left camp and started out after them. It was great fun for awhile, for I fell in with a herd of about a dozen and had secured two of the "varmints" when the survivors, seeming to think that "turn-about is fair play," began hunting me. Then the situation assumed a different aspect entirely, for the peccary when aroused is one of the most bloodthirsty of creatures and as revengeful as an Indian. Fortunately for me, a great gum tree stood conveniently near, and by means of the lianas that swung from its branches I was soon safe from harm and looking calmly down upon the little black beasts as they raged around the trunk. But a peccary, as is well known, can entertain only one idea at a time, and the idea that possessed the shallow brains of my friends below was how to effect my destruction. After rooting around awhile they all sat down in an attitude of expectation and patiently waited for me to descend. And they would sit there, I felt sure, knowing peccary nature as I did, until they starved me to death rather than allow me to escape.

I had only a few rounds of ammunition suited to their needs, but I killed three more before it was exhausted and peppered the hides of several others so that if they ever had entertained the idea of leaving they abandoned it entirely. I had not a morsel of food about me. The limbs I sat astride of were not so soft as they might have been if they had been made to order, and I was getting uncomfortable when I noticed a commotion in the herd. The leader of the band, a grisly old tusker with recurved fangs like Turkish scimiters, suddenly stood up and sniffed the air; then he uttered a "whoof" of rage and despair, struck a 2:10 gait and disappeared in the jungle, followed by all the survivors. I was saved by a black man and a dog.

It may or may not be true that the peccary has as intense a dislike for the black man as he has for a dog, but anyway the combination proved effective in this instance. The man who appeared at this juncture was the only other in that forest save myself, my sable servitor, Pappy Ned. He had been out all night hunting crapauds or forest frogs, and was on his way back to our camp with a backload of batrachians, the legs of which were to be served up in a style which only Pappy Ned knew to perfection.

"Goramighty, massa!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Was dat yo' gun goin' off pam! pam! lak yo' shootin' a reg'munt ob sogers? Ki, but it's lucky ole Pappy Ned come 'long, hey? Dem hawgs done know Pappy Ned an' jes' cl'ar out when dey hear um a-comin' along wiv dis yer dawg. Dey don' lak niggers, an' dey don' lak dawgs nuther, but dey'se death on de buckra man."

"Well, pappy, the buckra man, as you call me, has brought death to the peccaries this time, and they've good reason for not liking me, I fancy. But you came along just in the nick of time, old friend, and I owe you another reward for saving my life a second time." He had nursed me through a fever a few months before.

"Oh, me massa, dat ain' nuffin'. Me only too glad to sarve me good massa, fo' shuah. Yo' jes set down an' rest, while me done cut up an' skin dese hawgs—one, two, three, fo', fibe. Golly, massa, we done gut 'nuff meat fo' de Christmus dinnah, ain we? Not to menshun dis yere bag wiv two dozen fine fat crapauds in um, sah."

Pappy Ned set to work dressing (or to be exact, undressing) the peccaries, being careful not to taint the flesh with the contents of the peculiar musk gland which the species carries on its back, and while he is thus engaged seems a good opportunity for me to make my explanation as to the exact location of Crusoe's island.

It is not, as ninety-nine persons in a hundred think, the island of Juan Fernandez, on the southwest coast of South America, but it is a good many miles nearer the coast of our own United States, in the southeastern part of the Caribbean sea. I will not waste any time, either the reader's or my own, in argument, but respectfully refer the earnest inquirer to old Crusoe himself. Robinson Crusoe, Esq., mariner, of Bristol, England, whose adventures were first written out and published by Daniel De Foe in 1719, was somewhere in latitude 11 degrees north of the equator when he was wrecked—that is, of course, assuming there ever

A PECCARY.

was an entity called "Crusoe" in the flesh. But, whether he ever existed or not, that is where De Foe placed his hero when he had him wrecked on the coast of his island. To quote the words of Crusoe himself, just before it happened, "The master made an observation as well as he could and found that he was in about 11 degrees of north latitude, so that we were gotten beyond the coast of Guiana and beyond the river Amazones, toward the Orinoco, commonly called the Great river."

Now, that would be evidence sufficient for any sailor, but let Crusoe further explain, as he does well along in his narrative, when he first circumnavigates his island kingdom: "The land which I perceived to the west and southwest was the great island of Trinidad, on the north point of the mouth of the river Orinoco."

Trinidad, as everybody knows, is off the north coast of South America and is one of the finest British possessions in the West Indies. The only other island which fully answers the description given by Crusoe in relation of location to Trinidad is that of Tobago, from which Sir Walter Raleigh probably derived the name of the "weed" we call tobacco.

I long held the theory that this was Crusoe's island, and in order to prove it went down there on a hunting and exploring expedition, afterward writing a book about my adventures which gives all the evidence, even if it does not sufficiently establish the facts. At any rate, I "played Crusoe" for months in Tobago, the island of the ancient mariner's adventures, built a hut of palm leaves in the forest and for a time lived as good old Robinson lived, with the exception that I did not have any goats; neither did I tempt an attack of rheumatism by residing in a cave. I even had my poll parrot, my hammock under the palms and my "Man Friday," only the latter was not a Carib, like Crusoe's factotum, but a black man, honest and faithful old Pappy Ned, who soon finished skinning those peccaries and was ready to go with me back to our hut. Hanging three of the pigs up in a palm tree to await his return Pappy Ned shouldered the other two and the sack of crapauds and toted the load to camp, which was distant but a mile or so, and I followed after with my gun. As Tobago is a tropical island the meat would not keep a great while, and we really had much more than we could eat, but Pappy Ned said he knew of some black people over on the other side of the forest who would devour what there was left provided he could get word to them in time.

FREDERICK A. OBER.

There never was a more beautiful situation for a hut than the site of mine on a hilltop above the forest line, with views of tropical woods and shining shore, and, as the weather that Christmas day was simply perfect, I ordered my man to make our "spread" in the open, beneath the cocoa palms, sheltered from the blazing sun by the golden rooftrees only. So he set the table out of doors and lost no time in getting at the cooking, which was done over an open fire. Pappy Ned was as adept at preparing exquisite dishes from next to nothing as any Parisian chef that ever lived. We had a garden filled with such plants as the manioc, tania, sweet potato, arrowroot, yam, etc., not to mention corn and mountain rice. From a wild grove of coffee trees I obtained the fragrant berry for my morning beverage; also cacao, or chocolate, from another copse on the border of the forest, while the cocoa palms above and around my hut held a delicious cool drink in their unripe nuts. Pappy Ned dried and grated the cassava tubers, making "farine," from which he cooked great cakes more than a foot across. The juice of the cassava is poisonous in its crude state, but it is converted into a palatable substance by heat and forms the basis of the noted "cassareep," or pepper pot. We always had a pepper pot on hand as a standby, into which we threw the odd pieces of meat left over after ordinary repasts, and a goodly amount of the peccary flesh was thus disposed of, the cassareep acting as a preservative as well as condiment. But pepper pot was a poor man's makeshift, Pappy Ned always declared, and the day before he had walked the beach for sea turtle eggs, several score of which he had brought back to camp, together with a fine fish he had caught on the shore.

After working three or four hours over the open fire Pappy Ned came to announce, "Dinnah done ready, sah," at the same time handing me a "cashew cocktail" made from the juice of an aromatic fruit brewed with rum and stirred to effervescence with a "swizzle stick."

The grand repast of the day opened with gumbo soup, followed by fish, frogs' legs and turtles' eggs, while in the center of the table was peccary roast, flanked by a nicely browned guinea bird and a native wild turkey, with a vast assortment of vegetables from my garden. There were no drinks artificially cooled, ice being an unobtainable luxury in Crusoe's island, but there were tropical fruits in abundance—pines, guavas, mangoes, oranges and custard apples—all of which had been plucked within a stone's throw of my hut.

One thing only was lacking—a goodly company—to enjoy that Christmas feast in Crusoe's island. But we were content, for, as Pappy Ned observed, "De good Goramighty done gib us all we want, mo' dan we need and a heap sight mo' dan we desarve."

FREDERICK A. OBER.

THE SURVIVORS BEGAN HUNTING ME.

...ILL NOW GET BUSY

State Officials Explain Why They Didn't Get Here.

HOSPITAL TO BE DONE BY FALL.

Commissioner Follmer Says he Will Set up the Banquet if the Institution Isn't Done Then—Award Contract, Perhaps, in January.

[From Wednesday's Daily.]

"I will make you a proposition. The state hospital for the insane which is to be rebuilt in Norfolk, will be finished by October or I will give the people of your city a banquet; if it is completed, you give us a banquet."

In these words Commissioner Follmer of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings assured Chairman Robertson, of the local committee, that the reconstruction of the hospital would be an ended feat by next fall. And the people of Norfolk are willing to take up the offer.

At the site for the hospital, the board found a great deal of material which can be used in reconstructing the institution and which will, therefore, be a net saving so far as money to the state is concerned. They found many buildings as good as they were the day they were built and planned the places for the new structures.

Let Contract in January.

State Architect James Tyler, jr., already has some rough setches for the new institution and he will finish these immediately. "I believe," said Mr. Tyler to a News reporter this morning, "that we will be able to let the contract for building in January. After that the work will depend on the speed of the contractors and the board, itself.

"The west wing of the old administration building is the only part of the burned portion which will be left standing," said one of the members of the board. "It is in very good shape and we will be able to use it for any one of a number of apartments when the whole institution is rebuilt."

The Cottage System.

The cottage system will prevail in the new hospital. There will be a new administration building of two stories and a basement; and two cottages on either side of this, of two stories each.

The new administration building will stand just south of the old one and the cottages will be at the west side and the east side of this. The lawn which formerly lay just in front of the large brick building, will be covered with these new structures. There will be no basements to the cottages.

The administration building will be about 42x60 feet in dimension. Each of the cottages will be larger than the administration building and they will be about 50x75 feet. They will all be identically alike.

Colonial fire faced brick will be used for the facing of the new buildings and many thousands of the bricks which remain from the old building will be used for other portions of the work. The board found all of the rock and stones that will be needed.

No Iron Bars.

Each cottage will be built to hold sixty patients comfortably. There will not be an iron bar over any of the windows at the institution, as there were over all of the windows on the old one. The plans show homelike apartments in all quarters for the patients and in each long sleeping hall one attendant will be so situated that he can overlook the entire section.

It is the plan of the cottage system to take off every possible restraint and to give the patients as much liberty as can be safely done. Every comfort is to be given them in the way of freedom and recreation, so that even the most violent ones will want to come back and live there.

The cottage system is just now taking precedent in all of the newer institutions. The largest is in Toledo and it was here that the board got most of its ideas. The system originated in Germany many years ago and was first introduced into America through Boston.

All of the sleeping apartments will be on the second floor of the cottages. The attendants will sleep in the same apartments. Each cottage will be equipped with a dining room and in each dining room will be four little tables at which eight persons may eat. This will seat thirty-two people at one time and if there are enough patients, there will be two shifts for each meal.

If there is not enough money for four cottages and the administration building, three will be built. The architect is required to make but one plan for the several cottages so that this need not take much time. The administration building will be constructed in such shape that additions may later be put on.

While the cottage plan will not make as imposing an institution at the outset, it will, the board says, grow further than the other style ever would and consequently take more appropriations later on.

The Norfolk hospital, when it is completed, will be one of the finest in the country as every feature will follow the newest scientific methods.

In regard to their delay in getting here, the members of the board had much to say in trying to make good with Norfolk and north Nebraska. "We belong to so many boards," one of them explained, "that it seemed almost impossible for us to get together. We knew, too, that we couldn't do anything in particular when we did get here because the plans would have to be made first.

Lay it Onto Architect.

"Really," explained another, "we would have been ready to come months ago if the architect had had his plans ready. It was up to him and it was for him that we had to wait. We want the people to know, however, that we have not forgotten them during all of this time and that now they may expect us to get busy."

Bids will have to be advertised for during thirty days preceding the awarding of the contract.

The Schools Are Closed.

Yesterday was the last day of school preceding the holiday vacation and now the teachers and pupils will be permitted to devote their entire time to the pleasures and duties incident upon the Christmas and New Year's observances. In some of the rooms examinations have been occupying the time previous to the closing, while in others programs appropriate to the holiday season were in course of preparation and were given during the afternoon, quite a number of parents and friends visiting.

The high school was adjourned at noon and the grades were dismissed following the rendering of their programs. In a number of the grade rooms trees and other treats had been prepared by the teachers, and the last half day was a pleasing occasion for the little folks and the parents and friends attending. Appropriate decorations adorned many of the rooms and the holiday spirit reigned throughout the closing day.

The vacation will be of a week and a half in duration, and school will reconvene on Monday, January 4, when teachers and pupils will be expected to resume their duties, rested and refreshed by their holiday.

During the vacation a number of the teachers will attend the state meeting at Lincoln. Officers and committees will assemble in the capital city early next week to do preliminary work preceding the assembling of the convention which meets Wednesday. The session will continue during Thursday and Friday. Other preliminary work will be the examination of teachers for state certificates, which will take place on Monday and Tuesday. A number of the pupils will attend, and especially those interested in the spelling contest, which will take place on New Year's day.

Getting Ready to Click.

Linemen are busy looping up the wires for the Edwards, Wood & Co. copper wire which traces its way through northern Nebraska and into the Black Hills. A loop has been stretched to Stanton where an office will be established.

Operators for the various offices have been employed and one will arrive shortly in Norfolk to take charge of the key. The towns which will have offices are: Norfolk, Neligh, Atkinson, Long Pine, Chadron, Whitewood, S. D., Belle Fourche and Deadwood, along the main line west. Then there will be Stanton on its special loop and Winside, for whose office the wire between Sioux City and Norfolk will be tapped.

Butte, Spencer, Fairfax, Bonesteel and Stuart will be covered by the Wm. Krotter Co. telephones out of the office at Atkinson.

"We never employ women as operators," said Mr. Wright, in speaking of the new offices. "It is work for men and we have to have them. Not that we have any prejudice against womankind but it is too rough a job for anybody but big, husky fellows. Once we did have a woman, though. She had to support a whole family of brothers and sisters and I finally decided to give her the key. In at the house they always supposed she was a man. No one on the wire sent in more business than she did, either. She was a rustler. Finally some young fellow fell in love with her and made a roar because she worked in the office. They weren't to be married for six months and she wouldn't quit the job. So he just married her right away to get her out of the place and we've never had a woman since.

"The men in at the house asked me why I let that fellow go—that fellow who sent in so much trade. Finally I thought it was too good to keep so I explained that the fellow wasn't a fellow at all, but a girl. They never got over the joke."

STANTON.

Henry Buckendahl has been greatly improving his farm in Butterfly precinct the past season. He has built a fine house and erected numerous other buildings.

We are informed that Peter Ludwig and Wm. Kleckner have purchased a livery and feed barn at Wisner. They are good men and we hope they will do well in Wisner.

The Stanton orchestra gave a benefit dance at the Germania hall on Wednesday evening. The proceeds went to C. E. Kranz, one of their players, who has been ill for some time.

The school board held their regular monthly meeting Tuesday night. The board agreed on a vacation for the schools from December 24 to January 4. Nothing else of importance excepting the allowing of bills was transacted.

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

Elaborate Preparations Made for Observance of the Day.

CHURCHES TO HAVE PROGRAMS.

Trees and Treats for the Little Folks. A Number of Dances—Family Dinners Tomorrow—Activity Among the Shoppers Preceding the Day.

[From Thursday's Daily.]

Preparations are today being completed for the Christmas observance in Norfolk. Dainties and delicacies are in course of preparation for the numerous dinners that will be served, churches and homes and halls are being decorated for the entertainments and exercises that will take place tonight and tomorrow and there is activity and bustle everywhere.

Unless the weather man hurries there will be no white Christmas. Yesterday and this morning ideal weather has prevailed. The streets have been hard and dry—almost dusty—and the sun has shone bright and warm while at night the stars and the new moon have blinked merrily.

Church Festivities.

Almost every church in the city is to observe the anniversary of the Christ's birth, by giving joy to the little folks—and some who are older.

Christmas trees with treats for the little folks will be a feature for tonight, with appropriate musical and literary programs, cantatas, drills, and other exercises in which the children will take leading parts. The Lutheran churches will have their usual holiday observance, the Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Episcopal and other churches are making elaborate preparations for entertaining their people and tonight and tomorrow will be replete with pleasure, beyond a doubt, and it is anticipated that there will be full houses at each and every entertainment.

Christmas Dances.

Tonight there will be a dance in Mast hall. On Christmas night there will be another one, given by the O. R. C. club and also one by the firemen in Marquardt hall. Between Christmas and New Years several functions of a social nature are promised and the thus inclined of Norfolk will not lack for amusement.

Shoppers Have Been Busy.

Those who have viewed the immense holiday stocks of the Norfolk merchants and their increased number have done so with the impression that their purchases had exceeded any possible demand. Not only did those who had carried holiday stocks previous years lay in a larger stock this year, but many who had not previously carried seasonable goods made large purchases and shelves and windows and counters were piled high in about every place of business in the city. The appearance of things last night and today went to show that the merchants had not missed their guesses and that there was an unusual demand, especially for goods of more than ordinary value.

The streets were crowded with shoppers yesterday, which was the best day of the season preceding Christmas and the proprietors, clerks and messengers were kept on the jump from early in the morning until late at night attending to the wants of the customers. The stocks of goods melted away before the onslaught of the shoppers like a snow ball in a fiery furnace, and in the place of the goods there was an emptiness on the shelves and a litter on the floor that bore mute witness to the rush. Men, women and children jostled each other to get to the bargain counters and the choicest selections were quickly packed off, so that belated shoppers had rather slim picking. Many of the shoppers were farmers, whose teams lined the streets, others were from distant towns and the people of Norfolk were caught in the squeeze.

Holiday Travel.

The number of people who have taken advantage of the holiday excursion rates is astonishing, and all incoming and outgoing trains have been packed to capacity since the rate went into effect. Incoming trains have belched forth crowds of visitors coming to Norfolk and their places have been quickly filled by those who were outward bound to spend the holadays with distant relatives and friends. The train in from Bonesteel this morning unloaded scores of visitors to Norfolk, and before it left the platform at the Creighton depot, a crowded waiting room full of people was transferred to the plush seats in the varnished cars and undoubtedly the company found it necessary to attach more cars for the accommodation of the passenger traffic long before Fremont was reached. What was true of the Bonesteel train was likewise true of other trains and the holiday passenger traffic has probably never been exceeded.

The overloaded condition of the passenger coaches is duplicated in the express and mail cars where the spaces were filled with boxes and packages and mail bags taking and bringing cheer to many homes, and it will be surprising if all the preliminary work by the mail clerks and express mesengers can be done in time to deposit the boxes and packages and letters at their proper destination in time for the festival.