

THE SLEEPING PARSON.

Major Z. F. Wright Tells A New York Times Reporter Of The Wonder.

The following interview with Mr. Z. F. Wright was published in the New York Times of the 12th and will be read with interest:

Major Zacharias F. Wright of Newberry, S. C., who is staying at the Hotel Manhattan, was telling some of his cotton milling friends in New York the other day the strange story of the Rev. Hezekiah Elijah Perry of Silver Street, Newberry county, S. C., the only negro parson on the face of the earth, according to Major Wright, who is illiterate while awake and highly educated when in a trance.

The parson is nothing more or less than a psychological wonder. He is known from the banks of the Saluda, where he has so long enthralled his hearers with his sleeping discourses, to the banks of the Congaree, fifty miles further south, as the "sleeping preacher of the Saluda hay fields."

"For nearly a quarter of a century," said Major Wright, "this strange negro has been preaching his sleeping sermons. Although scores of people in Newberry and adjoining counties pronounce him an impostor, he is nothing of the kind. Old Hezekiah must now be well on the way to the three-score-and-ten mark, and although he has been examined by noted physicians and psychologists, who have applied every possible test to find out whether he was shamming, he has stood every test so far, and to my mind there is no doubt about the genuineness of the Silver Street wonder."

"When awake Hezekiah is just like any other ordinary South Carolina darkey. He is well behaved, courteous, and respectful, in fact the wide-awake Perry is a good specimen of what the old, before-the-war darkeys were. But in a trance he is a different person. I have heard him preach and watched psychologists, physicians, and college professors try to solve the mystery of his sleeping power, but so far the answer to the puzzle is missing. In the meantime the parson goes on his way, preaching his sleeping sermons and thriving thereby."

"Here is how Hezekiah does it. Every Sunday morning he ascends his little pulpit at Silver Street, and the moment he mounts the rostrum he goes into a cataleptic state, from which he cannot be aroused until the benediction is pronounced. There he stands rigid as a pole, long, lean, and meannily looking. It's the appearance of a mummy, and only the working of the mouth and the sound of the well measured voice indicates that the preacher is alive."

"First a hymn is announced by the sleeper, and then he leads the congregation joining in. 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye' and the various hallelujah combinations are his favorites, and those darkeys almost lift the roof of that little chapel when Hezekiah starts them to singing. The singing of the first song over, Hezekiah deceives the Lord's Prayer, the enunciation, being perfect, only the slow monotonous song-song way of its recital indicating the cataleptic state of the parson. The Lord's Prayer is followed with another of his own, and that prayer, as a rule, would do credit to a New York clergyman."

"Next comes the sermon, and there is where Hezekiah shines. Although without any literary training whatever, he reads passages in the Scriptures with his eyes closed, and not once does he make a mistake as to book, chapter, verse, or phraseology. Awake he could not do that to save his life. The nearest, for instance, that he can come to saying Nebuchadnezzar when he is awake is to mumble something that sounds like 'Nebud-had-a-razzer,' but in his trance he can rattle that word off like a professor in a theological seminary."

"Is this darkey person an impostor? I think not. Instead he is a genuine instance of a psychological freak. Not so long ago Hezekiah was the subject of a long debate before the soda fountain in my good friend Weeks's drug store. The upshot of that discussion was that it was decided to bring Hezekiah to Newberry and give him a chance to make good in the city opera house. The plan went through and Hezekiah came, did not see, and conquered. The test was conclusive to my mind. My neighbors in Saluda say that the negroes have even tried the red-pepper test on him. The stuff was held before his nostrils and even rubbed into his mouth and eyes, but did Hezekiah respond to the test as an ordinary man would have? He did not. He didn't even sneeze, although there was enough pepper used to make everybody in Forty-second Street sneeze half a day."

"After ordinary tests had failed to

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3 bales John P. King celebrated Sea Island, worth 8 1-3 at 5c. yard.

3 bales River Side Plaids, you all know the price is 8 1-3c., here at 6 1-4c. yard.

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Read This Has Gone to the Wall!

These remarks have come to us as being made by would be competitors while we were closed up preparing for our big sale. As a matter of fact they were made in a spirit of jealousy, but in justice to ourselves we wish to state that while it is true, I began business in this town years ago with a small stock, in a small room, with a small capital, there can be no shame for this, nor need I blush to admit it, the opposite should really be the case. I should be proud that we were small. It proves beyond a question of a doubt that I started right, and have won the confidence of the people, which I consider one of the greatest assets. I will be glad to compare our increased sales of 1908 with any merchant in Newberry handling the lines I handle. I am here to stay, and to serve you as ever, and it is my ambition to continue to make this the biggest and most popular store in upper Carolina.

MINNAUGH'S

awaken the sleeping parson at the Newberry experiment somebody suggested a hot iron. The iron was made white hot and its point placed against old Hezekiah's ankle. It burned all right, but Hezekiah kept on preaching. It did not make him move a muscle. Next somebody stuck a pin almost through his hand, but that had no effect either, and Hezekiah kept on exhorting.

"Finally came the supreme test. That was nothing more nor less than the extraction of a good tooth. Frank Wilson and Marcus Spearman, who saw that test applied, said afterward that it took all the strength of three men to get that molar out of old Hezekiah's jaw. But Hezekiah did not move an inch, and the sermon proceeded as if nothing unusual had happened."

"The tests more than half convinced many doubters that the old negro is a genuine phenomenon."

A Great Dinner.

(This poem was written 28 years ago and the dinner was served 28 years ago. The poem is republished with the addition of one stanza by Mr. J. H. Chappell.—Ed. H. & N.) The celebration of Mr. M. S. Epstein's 21st birthday and also in honor of Mr. A. Koppell's visit to Newberry, was a time long to be remembered by the many friends who enjoyed the bountiful and delicious dinner prepared and given to them by Mr. Klettner.

Col. Mord Foot, who sat at the head, Ate such amount to make a dozen men dead Before he was half through he let slack his strings To make preparations for other nice things.

Next came J. B. Wheeler who sat on his left, Ate turkey wing until he was quite deft.

He stood to his post like old Joe Ogum But said, no, thanks, I'll not take so-gum.

The next in rank was our friend Pat, Who ate much more than he could hold in his hat, He said we are sorry we cant do more We will take a walk, come back and eat up the core.

You are all familiar with little Ed. King Who is always ready for anything, He ate Klettner's dinner with great distraction Then asked if the cake gave satisfaction.

Next came Policeman Buck,

A better officer never stuck, He is also handy at such tables For he ate until he was quite disabled.

We remember with pleasure our friend Koppel Who enjoyed the dinner but prefers the bottle. He gets plenty to eat, or such is his looks, I wonder where is my friend Crooks.

You are all acquainted with Jeweler Scholtz, Who ate so much he needed some boots, To keep him from bursting in the rear, For he has to have some room for lager beer,

We must also mention old man Jaeger, Who said, boys, vot will you have better? Although he is old he stood to the rack, Until he had filled the very last crack.

On this side of the table sat Alderman Gline, Who has a very pleasant face and mind He did justice to potatoes, turkey and cake, And said, Mr. Klettner, you are good on the bake.

Next came the other Wheeler Bro. of course, Who likes cake and brandy for toast, Some think that in eating he beat them all With exception of Mord, whose mouth is quite small.

Now Jimmie Thomason, my son, you are quite small, Many more such dinners will make you tall. I congratulate you for refusing the wine, But you made up on the turkey, so you will not be behind.

Mr. Alexander, sat a slighing, Ate all the coweumbers Klettner was buying But when it comes to wine he never refuses, Says he can get goose whenever he chooses.

Our friend Ward at the low end of the table Ate all the good things he was able, When he got through he wiped his mustache, And said, boys, this beats barbeened hash.

Now, dear Moses, I wish you much joy.

The next thing for you is a fine baby boy, And when you get married let me know, If Klettner prepares dinner I'll be sure to go, Be sure to have Johnnie to hand 'round the things For he loves the good news the factory brings, He chatters and laughs with Miss A. so fair, But he takes care to keep Wadford from pulling his hair.

Last but not least comes Otto we love, Who is gentle and kind as a turtle dove, He spreads bountiful dinners for those of his choice And says, boys, help yourselves and rejoice.

Now, dear, Otto we thank you from our heart, And hope that we may never depart, From the ways of rectitude and right, And if you get in trouble call on us to fight.

Your humble servant, the writer, wishes you all success But thinks if he had been well he could do the best, Especially to fried chicken, cake and ice cream, For on such things he is a six horse team.

Sequel. Composed and written by our worthy chief, Who caught and had nabbed many a notorious thief, Therefore, as a fraud, if you hear the rattle, Follow quietly to the guard house our friend J. H. Chappell.

O. K.

The fair and square dealer is still on hand Is bound to his friends with an iron band, Though twenty-eight years is past and gone, A better man than Klettner has never been born.

J. H. C.

TEACHER WANTED. The patrons and trustees of the Vaughnville school will meet Saturday, August 1st, at 3 o'clock p. m., at the Vaughnville school house to elect a teacher for the coming term. School to run 6 or 7 months. Salary \$45 per month. Applications to be sent to the below trustees on or before August 1st.

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