THE INTERNAL REGIONS.

Jonathan Wilder's Wierd Story of the Earth's Insides.

How He Got There, What He Saw, and How He Got Away—Editorial Comments.

The following, to which allusion is made on the editorial page of this paper, is reproduced by request, from the DESERET NEWS of February 21st, 1893:

NEWS FROM THE INTERNAL REGIONS.

[From the Missouri Republican of 1826.]

Some months ago a Canadian, of the Rocky Mountain party, to whom I had rendered some services, brought to me a bundle of papers, of which he gave me the following singular account: He said that beyond the mountains he fell in with a party of the Hudson Bay company. With this party he found a brother that he had not seen for many years. His brother gave him the bundle of papers, and informed him that about two years before, he had been on a hunting party, east of M'Kenzie's river, where fell in with a tribe of Esquimaux Indians, from one of whom he received the bundle in exchange for a knife. The Indian told him that a long time ago, his band was encamped on the sea shore, a great distance to the northeast; that one day a strange man was seen on the floe, coming toward them; that the stranger was greatly exhausted from hunger and cold; that he took him to his tent and gave him food, but he died the next day, and left the bundle of papers, securely wrapped up in skins.

If my curiosity was excited at this singular history of these papers, it was much more so when, on examination, they proved to be a narrative of the travels and extraordinary adventures of an American by the name of Jonathan Wilder. The papers are in a greatly deranged state, and appeared to have suffered from the rude hands through which they had passed. The narrative is written partly on common paper, and partly on rude parchment, and what appears to be the bark of a tree.

It appears that Mr. Wilder was many years ago, wrecked on the coast of Africa; was taken prisoner by the natives, and was carried into the interior of the country; that he passed through many nations of Africa, as a slave to a black merchant; that he eventually fell to Willi, and was ransomed by the celebrated Mungo Park, whom he afterwards accompanied on his travels. He states that Mr. Park, himself and three natives, were descending a large river, (the name of which is rubbed out in the manuscript, but presumed to be the Niger), they came to a large city, at which they proposed to land, but were diverted from it by the hostile attitude of the natives, who appeared on the bank in immense numbers. They passed the city, followed by the natives on the banks, hallooing and using singular gestures, which added to their apprehension that mischief was intended. In a short distance, the river became contracted, and the current greatly increased, which induced them to attempt a landing at all hazards, but it was now too late; the river became a perfect rapid; rocks and whirlpools beset them on all sides, and they soon lost all control over the direction of the boat.

A large mountain appeared directly ahead, with a chasm in its base, gaping to receive them. The three natives had jumped overboard on the first alarm. Park and Wilder clung to the boat, and awaited their fate, which they saw was inevitable. They soon lost all sense of their situation, and eventually found themselves thrown upon a small island within the bowels of the mountain. Here they remained some time, subsisting on dead animals and fish, which they found in abundance, cast upon the island. Their eyes had, in a little time, become accustomed to their dark abode, and they were enabled to see and to feel the horrors of their situation. The rocks rose perpendicular from either shore, and formed an arch overhead, which effectually precluded all idea of escape. Grown desperate, in a situation which destroyed all hope of ever again seeing the light of Heaven, and fearing too, that the next rise of water would sweep them even from that desolate island, they determined to embark in their boat, which had survived the great injury, and submit themselves to providence, believing that no fate could be more horrible than that which awaited them in their present abode.

They accordingly once more launched themselves into the foaming current, and were carried along with inconceivable rapidity, until becoming entangled in an eddy, and landed on another small island, where to their great astonishment they found an old negro, who by signs and tears, made them to understand that he had been forced down the river and thrown on the island when but a boy, where he had ever since remained its solitary tenant.

They again embarked accompanied by the old negro, who gladly united his fate with his new acquaintances. The current gradually became less rapid, and they occasionally landed for repose. Our party now began to entertain some faint hopes that the river, after running under the mountain, would carry them safely out on the other side. After a voyage of considerable duration, to their great joy and astonishment, they were suddenly launched into daylight, in view of an open sea, but in what quarter of the globe they were at a loss to conjecture.

The party now landed to seek repose, after their long and arduous voyage, and congratulated each other that the extraordinary escape; and yet they could scarcely satisfy themselves that all had not been a dream. The party remained here several days, viewing the surrounding country, and endeavoring to find out on what part of the globe they were cast; but as no sun, moon or stars had appeared, Mr. Park's instruments were of no avail; neither could his maps and charts throw any light on the subject.

Reflecting on their late extraordinary adventures, and their present singular situation, Mr. Park was induced to examine a book which he had with him, containing some philosophical speculations on the organization of the globe. This book speculated about the 18th century, and is supposed to have been written by a Frenchman, under the title of Tellemend, an East Indian philosopher. The writer had advanced the singular idea that the water had once covered the globe; that by some convulsion of nature the earth appeared; that mankind sprang from the sea, and originally had tails, which in time dropped off, like the tail of a tadpole, and that the globe was hollow within, and made up of concentric shells. At another time our party would have laughed at the speculation of this philosopher, as the visionary effusions of a crazed imagination; but, looking back to their late eventful voyage, and their present situation, in a pure, clear atmosphere, and seeing neither sun, moon nor stars, the truth flashed on their minds, that they had penetrated the globe, and were then in the Internal Regions.

Full of this idea our party embarked and coasted along the shore some days, and at last came to a large, well built, populous city. The astonishment of our adventurers was not greater than that of the inhabitants, who flocked round them in immense numbers, conversing in a language, to Wilder unknown, but recognized by Park as the Hebrew tongue; and the people proved to be a colony of Jews. Mr. Wilder gives a long and fascinating description of the city and its inhabitants, and enters minutely into a history of their manners, habits and customs, which do not appear to have undergone any material alteration from the manners and customs of their ancestors, as recorded in Holy Writ. The art of printing is unknown to the people; but they have written records of the great events, from the creation of the world, down to the sacking of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, and their king and people carried away captive. They have a tradition that when their King Zedekiah fled from the city of Jerusalem to the plains of Jericho, where himself and his army were made prisoners, an angel appeared to those who remained in the city, and after having selected all the virtuous and faithful led them forth by night and conducted them through many nations, and for many days, until they came to a cave or hole in the earth, which they entered, and which was closed behind them; and that they passed through the earth to the world they now inhabit, as a place of refuge, where they are to remain until the coming of the Messiah, who they believe is to lead them back to the land of their forefathers; and as a reward for their sufferings and their constancy, will make them a great and mighty nation, to whom all the other nations of the earth shall be subject. They said it was foretold them, that about the year of the world 5629 a great prophet would appear on the south side of the globe, who would build a city of refuge, and gather together the remnants of the scattered tribes of Israel, preparatory to the restoration.

This people have immense wealth in all the precious metals, and an abundance of domestic animals, the most remarkable of which is an animal much larger than the elephant of the old world, and supposed by Mr. Wilder to be the mammoth, whose bones are occasionally found on the American continent. They have neither sun, moon nor stars, but receive light and heat from the reflection of the sun on an immense luminous body placed opposite two holes or openings, one at the North and the other at the South Pole, and the light and the seasons are regulated by the revolving of the earth. The inhabitants have spread over the most part of the interior world, but reside principally in cities. Though governed by the same law, wars and rebellions are very frequent. Their chief city and their seat of government, where the king resides, is called the city of Noah. Whilst Wilder was there, several cities rebelled against Mordecai, their king, but were subdued, and heavy contributions levied on them. Fire-arms have long since been known to them, and they have large magazines of arms and military stores. The magazines sometimes blow up and do great damage to lives and property. Mr. Wilder enters into some speculations as to the probable effect such concussions have on the external surface of the globe, and arrives at the conclusion that our earthquakes are caused by the blowing up of these powder houses.

Park and Wilder traveled over the greater part of the internal world, and visited both the poles. The South Pole is surrounded by the sea; but at the North, a rim of land surrounds the opening, except a narrow strait connecting the external with the internal seas. This people say that about two thousand years ago a part of the nations rebelled and determined to return to Jerusalem. They journeyed northward, and went out at the north pole, and were never seen or heard of afterwards. This left Park and Wilder to entertain a hope of being able to return to the new country by the same route. Wilder makes some pertinent remarks and suggestions as to the probable origin of the Indians of the American continent.

Park and Wilder having finished their exploration of the country, became anxious to return to the old world, and having provided themselves with necessaries for their journey, set out at the North pole. They traveled nearly round the polar opening, which they judged to be two or three hundred miles in diameter, and made many attempts to penetrate to the south, but suffered so much from cold and fatigue, that they gave up all hopes of succeeding, and resolved to return and end their days with the new found people. Nothing, however, could subdue the desire in the breast of Wilder to revisit his native land; and after some repose, the desire induced to make another attempt. He started alone, traversed the regions around the pole, the climate of which he describes as quite mild, growing colder as he progressed south. After innumerable hardships, he traversed the wilderness, and arrived at the open sea. He journeyed eastward, along the sea shore, until he came to a tongue of land, stretching away to the south. This he rightly concluded, adjoined or approached the American continent. He now journeyed southeast forty-five days, and arrived at the extreme point of land in view of the American continent, from which he was separated by a strait twenty-five or thirty miles. He gives a glowing description of his feelings, on arriving in sight of his native continent, and the hope of once more seeing his country and his home. It was midsummer, the strait was frozen over, but appeared open further south. He here makes his last entry on his journal. He resolved to attempt the passage of the strait, and if he succeeded, endeavor to find his way to some Indian nation, or perhaps some of the British posts. It appears he lived to set foot on his native shore, and died, or was murdered by the savages.

In several parts of Mr. Wilder's narrative he touches on the subject of converting to Christianity the Jews of the interior world, and in a note to one of his last chapters, he appears to have formed the design, if he should live to reach his native town of Boston, to prepare himself as a missionary, and return to the people he had left.

I have given but a sketch of some of the prominent parts of this wondrous narrative. The papers are greatly disordered, and as soon as my leisure will permit, I intend preparing them for the press. The work, including maps and drawings, will probably occupy a volume of some three hundred pages. In the meantime the curious may have an opportunity of examining the singular manuscript by calling on me.

As wonderful as the narrative appears to be, to me it has the stamp of authenticity.

CORNELIUS P. BRESDANG,
No. 179 North Q Street, S. L.

On another page of the same issue in which the foregoing appeared (DESERET NEWS, Feb. 21st, 1893) Dr. Willard Richards, editor and publisher of the NEWS, made the following comments:

INTERNAL REGIONS.

We give the "News from the Internal Regions," as we do other stories, just as we received, and for what it is worth. Some curiosities in Wilder's narrative suggest a few queries, concerning some of which we have not the historical facts before us. Does the history of Mungo Park give any more definite account of his death by drowning, than the narrative of Jonathan Wilder? If it does, who knows that Wilder's statements are false? Who knew that Ptolemy's system of astronomy was false, before Copernicus arose? And if Copernicus has proved Ptolemy's system false, is it not possible that some late philosopher may yet prove some portions of Copernicus false?

If the earth is a solid body, growing more and more dense to its center, of what use is that center? Has God formed anything in vain? If, we may suppose, the earth is a living animal, what does she not forget her? Then, if the earth were solid, and more solid towards its center than its surface, would not animals on the earth be more solid at their center than their circumference; instead of being strongly ribbed near the surface, so as to support the greatest pressure, leaving a cavity in the center capable of active operation? Might not even the opossum understand this? Do not our guide makers understand that a hollow globe is preferable to a solid? If so, why do they make them hollow? And shall miniature globes, the works of man's hands, be made on a wiser plan than the great original globe?

If it is contended that the earth must be solid, to secure and make fast the north and south poles, that are sticking out at opposite sides, like an axletree, or pivot, on which the earth turns round, on what boxes or hooks do these poles or pivots hang or rest? Is it the same hook the philosopher hung his scales on to weigh the sun? If so, where shall we get the other hook?

If the earth is hollow, would not that destroy gravitation? What is gravitation? Who will be so kind as to define its cause? Until the causality of gravitation is defined, who knows but that gravitation fixed at the center of a crust, 50 or 100 miles thick, composing an outer, would have just as good an effect, for all practical purposes, for those living on its surface, as to have it fixed at the center of a solid? And with a hollow earth, and gravity at the center of the crust, might not the inner inhabitants enjoy all the gravitating blessings of the outer? If not, why not? But if they should, how could they get light? How did the brother of Jared get light in his barges? Might not the internal inhabitants get light in the same way, or according to Wilder's story? And if the internal inhabitants don't like popular gravitation, why may they not use the pattern of Jared's platform?

An ancient prophet suggests that a portion of ancient Israel went off into the north country, and the Lord shut them in: into what? Was not Cain to be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth? We have heard of wonderful things in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea; are these some of them, or whence originated the prophecy or tradition in Wilder's narrative, that in 5629 year of creation, a great prophet shall arise on the earth, &c., which was literally fulfilled in the mission of Joseph Smith? We are willing to confess our ignorance; will some able historian or philosopher, or astronomer answer the above queries in as brief a space as possible?

Has Mr. Breading ever published Wilder's narrative as he proposed? If so, where can it be had? Will some friend send us a copy? Has Sir John Franklin passed in at the North Pole? Is he now exploring the Internal Regions? If so, when will he come back?

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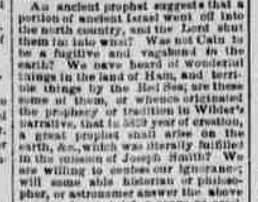

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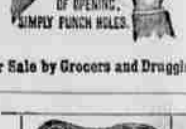

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