

## 2-WEEKS' SHOWER OF ROCKS

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...and the fact that he was struck by several rocks accounts for his unwillingness to return to the danger zone with his faithful master.

When the family was gathered in the barn several big rocks rose from the ground just outside the door and thumped on the floor of the porch. One of them, a flat piece of shale, a foot and a half in diameter and weighing twenty-five pounds, Dr. Adair recognized as a stone from the walk, he carried it to the yard and found that it fit snugly back into the hole from which it had been flung. Several hours passed without the rock shower showing any signs of abating, and a darkness settled down it became imperative that Dr. Adair take the hands into the open and finish up the farm work. With stones flying all around them, they had several loads of bundled fodder to

the barn and stored it in the loft, working to the weird patter of the falling pebbles. They were making syrup on the place that day, and long after dark, as he tended the fire, Dr. Adair heard the clatter of small stones striking against the kettle.

Next morning the stones were still whizzing back and forth, although they did not seem as numerous as during the preceding afternoon. The phenomenon continued for ten days or two weeks, the flights of the rocks becoming shorter with each passing day. The Adairs grew so accustomed to seeing stones leap into the air and thud back to earth that they actually failed to note the day on which the pebbles and boulders on the place began to behave as boulders and pebbles are supposed to behave.

Mrs. Hudson substantiates her brother's story in every detail, although she points out that she was not an eyewitness to the rock showers that occurred on distant parts of the farm. In a naturally soft voice to

which eighty-one years have added clarity and sweetness, she describes the phenomenon as she viewed it from the vicinity of the "big house" and the kitchen.

"Being the eldest of the girls—I was 13 then—it was my duty to look after the younger children and help mother with the housework," she explained. "I remember we were all terribly frightened when the rocks first began to fly, but, as no one was hurt, we gradually became accustomed to them. After the first day or two the large stones in the houseyard didn't jump around any more, and I was not afraid to take the babies out to play. We kept away from the fields and the creek banks, where smaller stones were continuously buzzing through the air.

"Many of the pebbles that fell in the yard or struck the house were wet, proving they had come from the bed of the creek several hundred yards away," Mrs. Hudson continued. "These, as well as the stones of larger size, seemed always to fly toward

us at about the height of a man's waist. I do not remember seeing any rocks high in the air, although one night a big rock did fall down the kitchen chimney. I was especially frightened that same night when, as I started to carry the baby into the house to put him to bed, a huge rock jumped into the hall ahead of me. Brother Ben came and rolled it into the yard, placing it back in place in the little terrace that bordered the walk."

Dr. Adair and Mrs. Hudson explain that their mother, when the rock shower first began, suspected some clever trickery on the part of an unknown enemy who wanted to drive them from the farm. But later, when it became obvious that no human could be responsible for the stones pushing their way out of the ground and soaring off through the air before the eyes of several persons, the little family agreed that they were witnessing a new and uncanny freak of nature.

In those autumn days of 1884 the war was drawing to a close, and far-sighted Mrs. Adair realized that, with the freeing of the few slaves, the little farm would be her family's only asset. Afraid to call the attention of neighbors to the flying stones lest they spread the story that the property was "haunted," she extracted promises from the children and the negroes that they would never tell what they had seen. No doubt she hoped to have the mystery cleared up when the father and the older sons returned from the army; but the father died immediately after arriving home, two of the sons had been buried on the battlefield, and the home-coming of the third boy, who was a prisoner in Illinois, was so long delayed that the mystery had all but been forgotten. Later, when the farm was sold and the family scattered, the children continued to keep the affair secret, mainly because they realized how utterly incredible their story would sound to an outsider.

Both Dr. Adair and Mrs. Hudson presented the writer with signed accounts of the phenomenon as they witnessed it, and the facts given in this article are taken from these papers. Before consenting to make the story public, Dr. Adair made every effort to locate at least one other witness beside himself and his sister. But letters sent to relatives and former neighbors in the vicinity of Commerce and Hood's Mill elicited the information that the former slaves are long since dead, as are most of the white people for whom the darkies worked following their emancipation and to whom they may have related the tale. Oscar Adair, 90, a brother of Dr. Adair and Mrs. Hudson, was in a northern prison camp near Chicago at the time of the occurrence and can only recall the facts as they were given him in contemporary letters and upon his return home, long afterward.

Geologists have no explanation of the strange behavior of the stones to offer, nor do historians recall having heard of a similar occurrence in this or any other part of the country. The sixty-eight-year-old mystery, related for the first time, threatens to remain a mystery.

## 5-MILE SWIM SAVES WOMAN

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...with me, but soon I didn't hear any more and there was an awful stillness.

What night seemed a thousand years long, but it finally wore itself away. Mike and I seemed frozen and numb, and we were so dazed that we didn't care what happened. As it began to get light, Mike begged me to drown with him, but I wouldn't do it. He had lost the use of his legs and arms, and I tried to rub and blow a little life into him, but it didn't do any good. His lower jaw hung down and he couldn't control it. It was so awful that I tried to prop his mouth shut with the rock. We had stuck the ice pick into the lumber and somehow it had stayed there. So we took it and stuck it into his life preserver and tried to keep his mouth shut so the salt water wouldn't get into his lungs, but we couldn't. He jumped seaward time and time again, and I'd pull him back as best I could. His eyes were as big as saucers, and there was death coming right out of them. He would rave and mumble and beg me to die with him.

I told him to take hold of my foot; that was getting daylight, and I would make it to the shore. We started out, but his grip weakened. I called to him, but he didn't answer. I knew it was all over, and I wouldn't look back, because then I knew I would lose my nerve and drown, too.

I swam on and on. Once I saw a shark. I passed several feet in front of me, but I kept still and let it go on. The life preserver helped, but it cut into my flesh so that I couldn't stand it, and before I got to shore I took it off.

When at last I felt solid earth under me again, I had just time to thank God before I fainted.

It must have been about 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning when I got to shore. I lay there all day long and all night long, motionless. Sometimes I was conscious, but mostly I was dreaming. I saw Mike starting

at me, and begging me to drown with him. I dreamed all sort of hideous things. It was the next morning before I was right in my mind again. Then I sat up and looked around.

"I didn't know exactly where I was, but I thought the key must have people living on it. I was so sore and stiff I could hardly move, and my whole body was throbbing with pain. I saw some white pine boards, and was just wondering if I could tear my clothes into strips and tie the boards on my feet so I could walk, when I heard the chug-chug of a motor boat. I had just strength enough to wave one of the boards, and I was lucky, for the men in the boat saw me."

And that is how Mrs. Ocie Carey happened to be rescued. The boat was owned by Alva Sweeting, of 135 S. W. Ninth Street, Miami. He is the owner of lime groves on Elliot's Key, where Mrs. Carey had swum ashore, and he was headed south to get a cargo of fruit.

In the boat with Mr. Sweeting were William Brooks, his son, Eric Brooks, and Fred Johnson, a fisherman. They took Mrs. Carey to the Brooks cottage, where Mrs. Brooks put her to bed.

"They were perfectly wonderful to me," declared Mrs. Carey. "They did everything they could. I was dying with thirst, but they knew just how much water to let me have at a time. They gave me soft-boiled eggs when they felt I was able to eat."

## Incline Helps Farmer Start His Balky Truck

A farmer, who had a truck that was hard to start, found the following method effective to overcome the trouble, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. The floor of the truck shed was raised by filling in dirt until it was high at the back and formed a fairly steep incline. When the truck

was stored at night, it was backed into the shed and the brakes set. It was then a simple matter to start it by putting it in gear and releasing the clutch and brakes. After the truck had coasted down the incline, the clutch was engaged and the truck immediately started.

