

# DESERT EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, September 7, 1890.  
FOOT FALLS UPON THE ROCKS.

In Carson Valley, Nevada, near the town of Dayton, there are many curious and interesting geological vestiges of ancient fauna and flora. Petrified palm trees, conifers, and many species of extinct tropical plants are found in abundance; but the most notable object in that region is the "foot-printed rock." At the mouth of El Dorado Canon, on the northeast side of the Carson river, a wagon road passed over a plain of naked rock which lies nearly horizontal, and is apparently composed of silicified volcanic ashes or, at any rate, the product of some sort of volcanic matter. This stone is extensively used in Nevada for building material, and is considered superior to the freestone of the Atlantic States. From the appearance and markings of the rock about which we are writing, it is quite apparent that it was at one time in a soft, plastic condition, analogous to mud or wet mortar. The surface of the rock contains innumerable footprints, or tracks of quadrupeds, all as distinctly defined as if they were impressed there recently. The most remarkable of these impressions is that which has been made by an enormous beast of the equine genus. Many of these ancient horse tracks measure 18 inches in diameter. The impressions are deeply cut in the rock and have the precise form of the horse's hoof, except that the heel, or heavy fetlock, of the beast has also made an impression in the rear of the track. The same rock surface contains tracks of the young of the same species; these last being about the size of a full grown modern horse's track. In addition to these, the rock is dotted with the foot prints of enormous bears, elk, deer, and other animals. Two or three years since, the skeleton of a large fossil animal was exhumed in Nevada. The specimen when alive probably measured about 18 feet in length by about 7 or 8 feet in height. Although the specimen was in an advanced state of decomposition, those who examined it were satisfied that it belonged to the genus *Equus* and was probably the kind of creature which left the footprints above described.—*Santa Clara Argus.*

**WHALES.**—Some very interesting information upon the habits of this fish was communicated at a recent meeting of the Boston Society of Natural History. Capt. N. E. Atwood presented a buoy or float made of the inflated stomach of a black fish. It was attached to a line, and used in harpooning whales. He also stated that whales differed greatly in the quantity of oil which they contain; females yield from eight to twenty barrels, while seventy-five barrels and even a greater number are taken from males; one fish is known to have yielded 146 barrels. About one-third of the oil of the sperm whale is in the upper part of the head; the oil found there and in the flukes, all of which is termed head oil, differs from that obtained in any other part of the body, and was formerly considered more valuable; since the introduction of petroleum, both kinds have been rated alike. From the east of the Grand Banks to the Azores the whales are mostly males, while near the West Indies the females abound. Unlike the hump-backed whale, the affection of the cow sperm whale for the calf is not very strong, for if the calf is harpooned the mother takes flight. Whales believe that whales know when one of their species is harpooned, even if it is miles away, for they are at once seized with a panic. Whales are comparatively easy to kill, just after they have reached the surface to spout. On one occasion, Captain Atwood saw a whale go down seven times, each time with four hundred fathoms of line.

**WHAT IS CROQUET?**—Croquet mainly consists in striking balls through hoops. There is hardly a lawn in Europe fit for the purpose, without a set of little arches, which look like human springs and traps for the unwary. The game is new; and it is a pleasant, tapping, chattering, respectable, flirting game, too. Men, women and children can play at it. Reverend dignitaries and fashionable ladies, crinolines and knickerbockers, can all play it at once. It is easy to learn and yet admits of many degrees of skill. It gives fresh air, and does not make you hot. Unlike archery, it can be played on a small place. It is not dangerous—no one has ever been mortally wounded at croquet. It is cheap. If not independent of the weather, it is not affected by the wind or sun—no one need complain of the glare of light in taking aim, or of the disturbing breeze which turns aside the arrow. It can be played by ladies and gentlemen on equal terms, and with the same tactics. And it is the very chief provocation for small talk and garden gossip. Upon my word, I have no idea of the number of recommendations which it possesses. I had dipped my pen rather with the intention of blackening croquet rather than otherwise; and now its dissection has converted me. I do not wonder at the polite rural world playing croquet. It conceals the age of the old, and displays the grace of the young. Grandpapa, in whose hand a bow would look absurd, whose lumbago would interfere with the exercise of quoits and bowls, can, and does often, play a game of croquet. He need not bend his back; thus it is a good pastime for those getting rather stiffish. And for those full of ease and grace, what better? A girl with neat ankles will play at croquet all day long—it is made for pretty feet and well-shaped boots. And yet, with all these social and coquetish recommendations, it is a game within the pale of the most strict and straightened society. A Quaker might play at croquet with drab balls.

Reuben Sikes, a butcher, of Bennington, Vt., during a fit of delirium tremens, recently chopped off the hands and feet of his little three-year-old son with a meat axe, and would have gone further with his bloody work had not the screams of the child attracted the neighbors.

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