

Millie Christine : the two headed nightingale ...

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MILLIE CHRISTINE - THE TWO HEADED NIGHTINGALE

The Police News, June 3, 1871.

THE AFRICAN TWIN MONSTROSITY.—Two lively, active, intelligent black girls, now about 5½ years old, are united inseparably together *dos à dos* by the termination of their back-bones. This freak of nature is attracting much attention in Edinburgh, and is certainly one of the most extraordinary living specimens to be met with. The children are named respectively Christina and Milley Makoi; they are gaily dressed, and converse frankly with their visitors, and sing to them little songs in dust sweetly enough. On the occasion of our visit to them the stouter one, in reply to a question, announced that she is considered the prettier one, but her sister very quickly put in the claim of being the *gooder* one. Although so closely combined, they have their likes and dislikes, and, like other children, occasionally a bit of a quarrel, which they can carry on by heel-kicking, finger-pinching, elbowing, and clunching heads; but they seem upon the whole good-tempered creatures, and soon make amends with a mutual kiss. They are accompanied by their mother "Monimi," who has been lately freed from the bondage of slavery, and the proceeds of exhibition, after paying expenses, are to be applied in rescuing also from the galling yoke the father and the other sisters and brothers, of whom there are eight. To the medical profession this natural curiosity is more particularly interesting for various reasons. It may be mentioned that some of the viscera are found not to occupy their usual places; the heart of one, for instance, beats in its proper place, while that of the other beats in an abnormal position. As to the origin of the *lusus*, it is a mystery of mysteries. It is said that everything has a cause, but here the men of science are compelled to acknowledge the deep obscurity in which such a subject is involved; perhaps frights, or accidents, or hardships may have to do with it. In viewing this phenomenon we cannot but rejoice that such a case occurs very seldom, and our thoughts should ascend in admiration of the wisdom and kindness of the Great Almighty, who not only regulates the proportions of the sexes, but orders that such a case as this shall be as wonderful for its rarity as for its peculiar appearance. We conclude this brief notice by narrating the remark of a *scotte* Newhaven fishwife to her sister in the market—"My certy, they may weel ca't an unpat'ral cur'osity, but eh, Peggie, wuman," stroking herself with complacency, "we canna be over thankfu' that we warms bris'd together in sick a way as you."—*Scotchman* Free. 28 Jan. 1871.

THE AFRICAN TWINS



(CHRISTINA AND MILLY.)

MISS MILLIE CHRISTINE, THE TWO-
HEADED NIGHTINGALE.

(SUBJECT OF ILLUSTRATION.)

We give in our front page an engraving of the young lady who has not been inaptly termed the "Two-Headed Nightingale." This extraordinary being is perhaps the greatest living wonder of the world, and certainly far surpasses in interest the renowned Siamese Twins. On Saturday last we were introduced to this young lady and the giant and gnomes at their own private residence, and were much pleased with our reception and the opportunity of being able to have a quiet *teu-teu* with these great living curiosities. Captain Bates, the giant, is a handsome gentleman, with an agreeable, good-humoured expression on his countenance. He has a pleasant musical voice, and covered with us freely upon several topics. Miss Swan was also affable and courteous in her manner. Soon after our introduction to these two, Miss Millie Christine entered the room in the most easy and natural manner possible. Our astonishment was great indeed, but it was considerably increased when the lady sang a duet, which was really a charming piece of vocalization. We cannot do better than subjoin the following description of this interesting exhibition from the *Daily Telegraph* of last week:—

"We may at once frankly admit, with regard to the malate sisters, united by a yet closer bond than the curi-
tiginous literature which binds the Siamese Twins, that the expectation of repulsiveness, which most naturally occur to most people with educated feelings, is somewhat agreeably and surprisingly negated at the very first glance. Healthiness and a sprightly manner of speech as well as motion would hardly be looked for in such a case; but they are certainly noticeable in a striking degree. The 'lectures' which is given by an American gentleman from the platform on which Miss Millie Christine dances, sings, and recites verses, tells a good deal more than we can attempt to repeat; but on such an important authority, it is at least a pleasing task to record that 'there is here two distinct intellects, two bright responsive wills, four legs, four arms, two heads, and one trunk, joined about the middle,' as also that Miss Millie Christine has been 'both anatomically and physically examined' by surgeons of the highest attainments and reputation, who have pronounced her the most wonderful being on the face of the earth. It is quite true that the body, from the strange junction of its double upper parts downward, is one; the alimentary system or systems nothing—Nevertheless, there are four well-formed and remarkably active legs capable of exercising themselves rather gracefully, and at all events naturally and easily, in a dance. Above the branch of the spine, where the body becomes two, Miss Millie Christine is a couple of finely mulatto or 'brown' girls; who might be mistaken in this country, where the pure and unadulterated Black is rarely seen, for a double negress. The faces are plump and merry; the jet hair curling in long natural ringlets; the teeth, of course, very regular and white, as are the teeth of all persons with African blood; the voices musical, which likewise is often a happy trait of the negro race and its offshoots; the arms at once lithe and well-rounded; and, in fact, there is nothing approaching to deformity in the upper persons of the two girls, unless it be their high shoulders and short necks. Without descending to final particulars, which may be properly and instructively supplied by the *Lancet*, we may just observe that Miss Millie Christine would have no valid excuse for appropriating two chairs at a fete of the Botanic Society, in contravention of the law laid down by the judicious Mr. Sowerby. The dual young lady, indeed, might and does sit upon one of the old-fashioned music stools. When waiting or singing a duet she can manage to turn both faces pretty nearly in one direction, though the juncture of her two bodies is nearly back to back. It may be surmised that the connection of the spine is only osseous; for to suppose that there is a branch of the spinal column would be to conjure up the idea of a greater physical marvel even than the appearance of Miss Millie Christine presents. With an American accent not stronger than that of the most charming of New York belles, and, as we have intimated, with voices of melodious quality, the 'two-headed Nightingale' sings some popular duets very sweetly and cleverly; and, by way of assisting the confusion of ideas by which it is sought to represent the two girls as one, a rapid recital of rhymes, professing to be autobiographical, is given by both voices at the same time, with a concurrence of emphasis which has a rather comic effect."

Accompanying Miss Millie Christine are a giant and a gnomes, the latter already known to the London public. Miss Anna Swann, a Nova Scotian lady, of the astonishing height of eight feet—if she were said to be nine no one would question the statement who saw her—is very graceful in her deportment and pleasing in her address. Were she a little woman, the same manner which she sustains would seem just as suitable, and would by most people be considered winning. The young giant on whose arm she leans, and who, though possibly the tallest man now in England, does not exceed her height, is Captain Martin Van Buren Bates, son of a Kentucky planter. Both the parents of this young Southerner are said to be above the ordinary height, those of Miss Swann having been rather small people. Captain Bates joined the Confederate army as a private, and rose, it is said, to the rank which he now assumes. He weighs 470 lb., the weight of Miss Swann being 413 lb. Sir William Lenoir, Sir Duncan Guthrie, Dr. Lethbridge, Dr. Owen Rees, Dr. Stallard, Dr. Guy, Dr. Priestly, Dr. Frothergill Smith, Mr. Wakley, Dr. Cross, Dr. Little, Dr. Braithwaite, Mr. Henry Lee, Dr. Stanley, Mr. Lord, and other medical and scientific gentlemen were present at the reception on Tuesday.

FROM THE "LANCET," May 27th, 1871.

MISSES MILLIE AND CHRISTINE.

THE Siamese Twins are altogether eclipsed by the extraordinary combination of two persons in one exhibited at Willis's Rooms on Monday last, under the names of Millie and Christine. These young ladies are now nineteen years of age, and were born of coloured parents in the old State of North Carolina in July, 1851. The *Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Reporter* for April 1st contains an interesting account of them by Dr. R. M. Townsend, from which we learn that the mother was a stout negress, thirty-two years of age, of large frame and pelvis. Her labour was brief and easy. The larger child was born first, by a stomach presentation, and the second by the breech. The children were remarkably sprightly and healthy, perfectly formed, but united at the sacra. In February, 1854, Professor Miller examined them, and reported that "the os coccygis of each is bent backward, and continuous with that of the other. The lower third of each sacrum is in like manner joined, forming with the attached muscles and integument a firm band, two or three inches in diameter, but so short that the nates of each child are pressed against those of the other. They are thus united back to back, but not exactly parallel; there being a slight inclination to the right side of one, and to the left side of the other. In consequence of this obliquity, they lie more comfortably on one side than the other, and having been from birth constantly laid in this position, their heads are not symmetrical, the bones of the cranium having apparently yielded to the continued pressure in one direction."

In 1855, these children were for a short time in London, and were examined by Sir W. Ferguson, the late Dr. Francis Ramsbotham, and others. Dr. Ramsbotham described their condition as follows:—"All four of the tuberosities of the ischia appear perfectly distinct. There is but one anus, occupying the position it would naturally do, as regards the coccyx in one of the children, provided that child were separated from her sister. In a corresponding part of the body belonging to the other child there is a deep blind depression, such as we see in one variety of imperforate anus, looking very much, when superficially examined, as if it were the termination of another rectum. Within the anus the finger passes into a wide cavity, the common continuation of the two intestinal recta; but the place where the two bowels unite in one canal is out of its reach. There are two sets of external organs, at the lowest part of the union of the two bodies—two clitorides, two hymens, and two meati urinarii; but there is no fourchette, for the labia externa of each running backward in relation to each body, behind the symphysis pubis, meet the labia coming from the other, and their junction produces an appearance of there being only one vulva. Each of these conjoined labia is not longer than an ordinary labium of a child of the same age, one inch, and the fossa navicularis, although it contains a double set of external organs, is but little larger than if it belonged to a single child. The genital fissure, instead of commencing anterior to the lower part of the symphysis pubis, begins quite underneath, at some distance behind the symphysis. Each symphysis pubis is naturally formed, and they are separated from each other by a considerable space. The anus is on one side of the vulva, so that what answers to the perineum, about half an inch in extent, runs laterally to the tips of the coccyges, which are somewhat twisted to one side. There are two vaginæ, and without doubt two uteri. There is reason to believe that, although the sacra are united, the caudæ equinæ are separate, for if the external genital organs of the one are touched, the other does not feel it; but the same remark does not apply to their lower extremities. The connexion between the twins bears a great resemblance to that of the Hungarian sisters, who were exhibited in London at the beginning of the last century."

Quite recently, when staying in Philadelphia, the twins have been under the care of Dr. W. H. Pancoast, on account of an abscess in the blind depression which represents a second anus. Dr. Pancoast was able to ascertain the existence of two bladders with a common partition, and of two recta with a common anus; but was unable to discover more than one womb, the same having a very long neck, and communicating with a common vagina. Dr. Townsend also informs us that there is but one menstrual period for the two; and that the quantity of the secretion is not more than would be natural for one person.

We need only add to this description that, above the lumbar vertebrae, the bodies are entirely separate and distinct. The mental capacity is good, and in both cases independent. The organs of circulation and respiration are also separate; indeed, the bust and arms of each body are extremely well developed. Both faces have an exceedingly intelligent and pleasing expression, and the general colour of the skin is that of a rich mulatto. Below the first lumbar vertebra fusion commences, and the postero-lateral part of the sacra are united together, forming a complete double pelvis common to both bodies, and united at an angle of something like forty-five degrees. Each pelvis is provided with a pair of well-shaped legs of equal length. The total circumference of the union is twenty-nine inches. Although the general circulation is separate, it is obvious that there must be a constant interchange of blood, so that when one suffered from ague the other did so likewise. The union appears to extend to the spinal cord, so far as sensation is concerned, for whilst volition is only communicated by each to her special pair of legs, both feel when any one of the four is touched. Indeed, so complete is the union, that when one moves a foot or leg the other feels the action, even when she does not see it. These united bodies are in perfect health. They dance, sing, and converse agreeably with their visitors. They generally use all four legs, but they can walk on two. In that case it is evident that the habit has been acquired, and the action looks more like two persons hopping alternately than a common walk.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, accompanied by Prince John of Glouceburg and Mr. Paget and attended by Colonel Keppel, and his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia and suite, attended by Colonel Ellis, paid a visit on Tuesday to the exhibition of the Two-headed Nightingale combination and other natural wonders at Willis's Rooms.—*Morning Post*, June 8th, 1871.