

Saint Mary's Beacon

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THE SHEEP OF HATTON LAKE.

A dead man has been recovered from Hatton Lake, Wyoming, for the first time since that mysterious body of water began to swallow up those who tempted it, says a Cheyenne paper. The body is that of Matthew B. Dawson, nephew of Fillmore, of the Southern Pacific Company. The Indians heretofore are intensely excited, and at first would not believe it. When the fact was proved to them they became awestricken and have not yet recovered from their wonder. They say that the fact of the lake having given up its dead indicates that there has been a great upheaval—a revolution or something of that sort among the powers of that world peopled with sprites and demons and fairies and governed by spirits and devils in which the Indians so implicitly believe.

In a cavern at the bottom of the mysterious lake lives the woman with the serpent's head, whose name is never spoken, for all the news and lizards and snakes are her spies and who speaks her name she will slay.

The recovery of Dawson's body has aroused great interest in the legend and bribes without number have been offered the Indians to tell the name of the water devil, but they will not for all the whiskey and tobacco that can be offered. Even one of the chiefs who has become civilized and pays taxes on a handsome farm would not reveal the name. He says he has no fear of the woman and has no faith in the legend, but declares he has forgotten the name.

Though they may only speak of this potent devil as "The Woman" there is no bar to their telling of her powers and exploits. It seems that she is rather proud of her power and wants her adventures told that people may fear her the more. She has been seen. Oh, yes, two Indians have lived long enough to tell of it after their eyes beheld her, but there is not an Indian in all Wyoming who would dare to seek her. Strange to say, though the woman is such a malignant power, the Indians do not rejoice at her overthrow, as indicated by the dead Dawson coming back from her dominion beneath the lake.

Maybe they fear that this upheaval bodes a change of all existing things, because gods and demons do not die, and they are very uneasy over the matter. The medicine men have hardly ceased their incantations since the token of the nether cataclysm has appeared.

Dawson was drowned last October. He and Fred E. Scrymser were out hunting on the lake, which is a sullen, wind-swept body of water in a deep canon. Exactly who they died is not known, but the capsized boat drifted ashore with Scrymser's body entangled in the rigging.

FRUITLESS SEARCH.
Nothing was seen of Dawson until his body was found by a couple of duck hunters who saw the bare skull less than one hundred yards from the shore point to which Scrymser's body drifted with the sailboat. The water was shallow and they waded out to investigate. The remains were identified by the watch and clothing. Scrymser and Dawson were respectively president and cashier of the Laramie National Bank, and socially, politically and commercially the most prominent men of the town.

Scrymser, who was in Wall street before he came West, was lessee of the rolling mills, employing 600 men. Dawson's life was insured for \$127,000. Most of this was paid, but near \$15,000 was expended in searching for the body. A diver was brought here from San Francisco. He looked on the bottom of the lake four hours a day for three weeks at \$50 a day. All the members of the families of Dawson and his wife are spiritualists, and mediums were brought from distant cities to locate the remains. This was after the lake was frozen over, and for a month they dragged through the holes in the ice.

Bat mediums and divers were alike unable to find a trace of the body of Dawson. The Indians regarded their work with contempt, though they could not understand how the diver escaped after his numerous visits to the bottom of the lake. They finally decided that because of his grotesque diving suit the serpent-headed woman would not recognize a man in him. In the middle of the lake the

never been sounded, and spring bubbles up there, and though numerous attempts have been made the lead has never reached bottom.

The Indians say the bubbling in the middle of the lake is the woman's breathing. How she came there nobody knows, but the Indians say that before the white men came to Wyoming the captives taken by other tribes were thrown into the lake to her. It appears that she is looking for her lover. She takes all the men who come her way, and when she finds that he is not among them she makes them all her slaves. If this is true she must now rule over an army of retainers, for unnumbered men—Indians and whites—have gone to her. Forty years ago, the old men of the tribes say, over a hundred emigrants with their horses and ox teams, were driven out on the ice by the Indians and kept there until the ice thawed and let them through. The serpent woman got them all.

Hunters are her favorite prey, for the tradition says the lover was a hunter. She tempts to the middle of the lake by a magnificent red swan, which keeps fluttering just beyond gunshot, and so lures them within her power. A strange thing about this great red swan is that it is a most desirable bird and the one that kills it will be the possessor of all sorts of power.

So many heroes of the Cheyennes have hunted the red swan, but the bird has never been taken.

WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE.
Of the two Indians who have seen the serpent woman and have lived to tell of it, the first saw her when she did not know of it. He was waiting hidden behind a rock on the lake shore for game when out of the lake came the woman. She swam about on the surface of the lake in the sunshine. Her form the Indian said, was incomparably more beautiful than that of the most beautiful daughters of the chiefs, but her head was that of an enormous serpent. When her back was toward him he could not see the snake's head, for her long hair hid it, and she looked simply like the most glorious of women.

The hunter lay flat on the rock and watched her. He dared neither to move nor cry out. When the demon had finished her sun bath she dived and did not appear again. Had this Indian kept quiet about the marvelous thing he had seen there would have been no trouble, for she did not know, but it was too wonderful not to be told.

He kept the great secret for a year, but at last he whispered it to a woman. A lizard heard the whisper, and in the morning the man was found dead. About his throat a giant rattlesnake had twisted itself, and its fangs were fast in his face. That was his punishment for spying on the serpent woman.

With the other man who saw her and told of it was different. He was a young chief who boasted before all the tribe that he was afraid of nothing and they set before him the task of conquering the serpent woman.

He was a brave man, but he took all reasonable precaution. He knew that against those of the other world his war clubs and bows and arrows were useless. The learning and magic of the medicine men alone might be of use to him in such a contest.

They taught him all they knew, and he, now confident of victory, boasted again that he would bring back the serpent woman.

As any of the Indians will tell you, the woman is not hard to find if you want to see her. All you have to do is to go to the middle of the lake at night when there is no moon and it is raining and snowing. Then there is no chance of anyone else seeing what happens, and no ordinary man ever comes back to tell.

Se the young chief set out, but he had boasted too much and a snake crept into his boat as he was leaving the shore. He came back after his encounter with the she devil, but when near the shore on his return he took off his magic shirt, provided by the medicine men, for he had fought hard and was tired and feverish. That left him vulnerable, and the snake hid in the boat struck him. The medicine men kept him alive during the night, but on the next day he died, and no one ever again tried to see the lake demon. That was generations before the emigrants went through the ice. Before he died the stricken chief told what had happened. In the middle of the lake he saw her, and she called

to him to come to her. She kept her head turned from him, and all he could see was her long hair and beautiful arms. She tempted him, but he knew her and would not come.

When she found that her blandishments did not avail she turned her serpent's face toward him and told him she would drag him down. She tried to upset his boat, but could not because of the magic of the medicine men. Then she called the wild fowl and they flew at him and beat him with their wings and cut him with their beaks and talons, but, though they bruised and hurt him, they could not drive him overboard or kill him. They tried to tear him off the boat, but could not.

At last he saw the dead men rising through the water to help her, and his heart failed him and he moved back to the shore, pursued by the demon and her unholy guard, who could not harm him while he wore the medicine men's shirt.

When he died the tribe threw his body into the lake to placate the demon whom they knew must be very fierce after her defeat. No one else ever dared her to fight, but she has claimed all who drowned in the lake for her victims ever since.

That is why the Indians were so sure that Dawson's body would never be recovered and why the return to the shore of his body has so utterly dumfounded them. They do not know if the lake demon has found her lover, and so cares no more for other men or whether some more powerful of the uncanny beings that haunt lakes and mountains and clouds has come and overthrown her, but they are apprehensive and very much afraid of what the future course of the woman with the serpent's head will be.

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