

LIVING IN SOLITUDE.

STRANGE HERMITS WHO HAVE ATTAINED NOTORIETY.

The Singular Creature Who Frequents the Woods of Pike County, Pa.—Berks County's Female Hermit—Hermit One of the Hermits.

"Here I have lived for 40 years, and here I hope to die. I want no other company than these woods and mountains give me. All I ask of my fellows is that they will leave me to follow in peace my own desires."

The man who spoke in this curious way was Austin Sheldon, the famous hermit of Pike county, Pa., the place, the entrance to his home, a small and gloomy cave in the densely wooded mountain a dozen miles or so from Dingman's, the sleepy little village so well known to lovers of the stream and chase.

A curious and striking figure is this old hermit, now fast past 80; features sharp, form thin and still erect, eyes keen and glittering and hair and long flowing beard as white as the midwinter snow. It is now 54 years since he made his appearance in Pike county and purchased a small farm near Blossing Grove.

Here, after the lapse of many years, he was found by relatives from Connecticut, who had long sought for him in vain. They besought him to return to his old eastern home, but without avail, and after following for his wants they left him to follow his strange and solitary life undisturbed.

Before they left they told the inquirers the touching story of Sheldon's life. Married to a beautiful girl whom he tenderly loved, her sudden death a few weeks after their wedding day made him henceforth a changed man.

After a few months he sold his property in Connecticut and disappeared. In the wilds of Pike county he found the solitude and rest he so much desired, and there, with his Bible as his only companion, save for one brief period, he has since resided.

Eight years ago he again fell sick, and found as before by hunters, was taken to Dingman's. His sister came from Connecticut to nurse him, and when his health was restored persuaded him to accompany her home.

But the longing for his cave and the forest solitude soon proved too strong to be resisted, and a few months' time found him back in his oddly chosen home, which he said he should never leave again, and thus far his resolution has been faithfully kept.

Pennsylvania had until a few years ago two female hermits. One of these was Sallie Ketter, who lived in the mountains near Berks county, Pa. She reached the age of 84, and for 48 years lived the life of a hermit, residing all that time in a tumble down hovel, the falling timbers of which finally produced the injuries which caused her death.

She had loved and been loved in return, so the story goes, by a handsome young sailor who left her with the promise that in five years he would return and make her his bride.

This promise was never fulfilled, for the sailor lover, impressed into the service of another country, died in a French prison before the time set for return.

A LITTLE GAME OF DRAW.

He Was a Novice, but He Had a Bit of Lead-Head's Experience.

There was a little game of draw on the other night. Four friends sat around the table. One of them was a novice. He had never played a game of poker in his life, but he was not averse to paying for a little instruction, inasmuch as he desired to have something to do whereby to while away what would otherwise be a very dull night.

He asked all sorts of foolish questions and threw his chips in so recklessly that his three friends were sorry for him. It did seem to be a shame for him to lose so much money, but then he wanted to play, and it wasn't their fault if they had the better hands. Finally a jack pot came around, and the novice, who sat next to the opener, raised the ante to the limit.

Then the novice tilted her to the limit again, and after he had done so looked over his hand and asked, "What did you say a straight flush would beat?"

The other players gasped. One of them said that it would beat anything in the pack but a royal flush, and the three promptly threw up their hands. The novice smiled blandly as he raked in the big stack of chips. Then he threw his hand down on the table. It was a simple straight, and that was all.

"What did you say that was a straight flush for?" asked one of the others, who had laid down three sevens and a pair of jacks. "Well," said the novice, "it is, ain't it? They're all red, and they run along in a sequence."

Then the three carefully explained that the cards had to be all of one suit to be a flush, and after much questioning the novice, who had tilted her to the limit, said, "Cards, gentlemen, they cannot come again! We're growing old."

"Hold on!" blurted the novice, "I want to ask another question. I'm a little mixed on this straight flush business. If I've got five cards of the same suit and they form a sequence, I've got a straight flush, have I not?"

The other players remembered the former jack pot and winked at each other. They insisted to answer the novice's question that the cards had to be all of one suit and that the sequence had to be in order. He was actually anxious to get his chips into the center of the table. He raised back to the limit.

"That's a good bluff," said the man with four aces, and he tilted back. The two others who had been trailing with fairly good hands all the time dropped out, and the novice and the man with four aces had nearly \$500 in the table.

GEMS IN VERSE.

Plains loss sense'll pull yer through When there's nothin else'll do. Yer most'll be yer own good With yer head a' developed.

The fairest lilies droop at eventide, The sweetest roses fall from off the stem, The rarest things on earth cannot abide, And we are passing, too, away like them.

We had our dreams—those rosy dreams of youth— They faded, and 'twas well. This after prime Hath brought us fuller hopes, and yet, forsooth, We drop a tear now in this latter time.

The silent voices of succeeding ages, Immortal tones of justice, mercy, truth, Recorded here within their speaking pages, The garnered wisdom both of age and youth.

Books are life's early friends, bright, earnest, winning, With added years the interest deeper grows, And faintly cheer its feeble earthly close.

Some find work where others find rest, And so the weary world goes on, I sometimes wonder which is best, The answer comes when life is gone.

Some eyes sleep when some eyes wake, And so the dreary night hours go, Some hearts beat where some hearts break, I often wonder why 'tis so.

Some hands fold where other hands Are lifted bravely in the strife, And so through ages and through lands Move on the two extremes of life.

Some sleep on far, far as old Time can take us, And toward the future cast prophetic eyes, Our sages are they, and they'd fain would make us Heroically good, divinely wise.

There is an unknown quantity of silver in the bay of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil—a silver mine, in fact, of comparatively speaking unlimited dimensions, and every ship that drops anchor there cuts into the bed of ore.

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