

THE LAST WITCH

In Old Georgetown—Granny Wendell and Her Fate.

SUBJECTED TO THE USUAL TESTS

She Sets Fire to Her House and is Consumed in the Blaze—How She Had the Pedigree of the Inhabitants and Got Back at Her Tormentors—An Interesting Story Written for The Sunday Globe by Revere Rodgers.

Though the ancient little city called Georgetown was not incorporated until the year 1751, every one conversant with its history is aware of the fact that it was founded sometime in the latter part of the 17th century, and that in the early years of the 1700's it was quite a bustling little town indeed.

Nature having generously provided it with a salubrious climate and a magnificent water fountain, it soon became a place of some importance. It was to Georgetown that the neighboring farmers brought their produce on market days, and it was here also that their wives and daughters purchased their dresses, and household goods. For you must know that a line of ships sailed direct from the different parts of England to Georgetown in those long ago days.

In after years, and during the first part of the century just passed, there were few separate towns in the South doing a larger business than Georgetown. If anyone doubts the truth of this statement let him take a walk along the water front of the old place, and he will notice block after block of deserted and ramshackle buildings, which in the heyday of Georgetown's prosperity, served as shipping houses, warehouses, etc., and in which were stored goods brought from every seaport town or city in the world; for in those good old times the Potomac River at Georgetown was always filled with ships, flying the flags of half a dozen different countries. But to return to the main thread of the story.

In the year 1750 there lived in a little one-story frame cottage situated on High Street a quarrelsome, shriveled-up, old body called by the children "Old Granny" Wendell, and spoken of by their elders as old Miss "Liza" Wendell. This ancient dame—for she was very old, but by no means feeble—was the terror of the townspeople. She had everyone's family history at her tongue's end, and upon the slightest provocation she would unburden herself at the expense of that unlucky mortal's family, who had aroused her ire.

No one could tell with any degree of accuracy just how old Miss Liza was, but it was an accepted fact that she was very, very aged, and moreover, it appeared that she was intimately acquainted with the history of every family that ever resided in the town, but how she was able to keep a correct tab upon the many mischievous urchins was what deeply mystified the folks. Let a child sneak up to her door and rap, or to shriek in through the keyhole at her, and then scamper across the road out of her reach, I say if a child did either of these things—and many, many children did them—often—old Miss Wendell's door would fly open and that ancient dame, standing in the doorway, would deliver a few unprinted pages of that urchin's family history that would cause the leaves upon the trees to flutter in delight as they listened to the vivid manner in which the old lady expressed herself at the expense of her tormentor's family.

It appeared from these harangues, delivered by this eccentric old lady that she had either fed every man or woman in the town, "when they hadn't a bite to put in their 'craw,'" or she had clothed them "when they hadn't a rag to their backs," moreover, when Miss Liza got worked up properly oaths flew from her mouth with a rapidity that was truly startling, and when you consider the fact that her memory went back to the third and fourth generations you can readily understand how fearful the good folks were of arousing old "Granny" Wendell's ire. But the children, not being as careful as their progenitors, gave "Granny" frequent occasions to display her knowledge of their families and their affairs.

Now, there lived in Georgetown at this time a learned authority on the subject of witches and goblins, who in his spare moments devoted considerable time to the study of goblins. But goblins not being popular in those times—for some unknown reason goblins never have had much popularity in America, although they always have stood high in the old country—he afterwards abandoned these studies entirely, as they were, to say the least, a troublesome and singularly unprofitable commodity. This distinguished seer was the sexton of the church, and of the graveyard also. He was reported to have been born with a caul, consequently he was gifted with second sight and could see a ghost a mile away on the blackest night ever known. Moreover, he had the greatest collection of witch-charms ever possessed in that part of the country. He was an elongated individual, with a lean scarecrow cast of countenance, adorned by a fringe of whiskers under his chin; a clean shaven upper lip, and a hook-like nose, surmounted by a pair of iron-bowed spectacles, is about as near as I can come in introducing to the reader this once celebrated witch and ghost authority, who was born bred, flourished and who died in old Georgetown long, long ago.

The name of this celebrated character was Wesley Dall, and he liked nothing better than to surround himself with a gaping crowd of auditors to whom he would recount numerous tales of adventures with the witches, and the spirits out of ghostland. "He" having been on several occasions ridden by the witches he made an interesting narration of anything pertaining to this subject and he was a favored guest at the taverns, and also in the houses of his townsmen, where, seated before the fire, he would hold forth upon his all-absorbing subject until the grown-ups would begin to glance uneasily about them, and the saucer-eyed youngsters in climbing up

stairs to bed would find a goblin in every shadow along the way.

This remarkable personage was known far and wide, and very frequently he was sent for to come to a neighboring town to "lay" a witch or two. He had several favorite witch tests which had on several occasions gotten numerous old nearsighted ladies into no end of trouble. One of these tests was to place a large earthen basin filled with water in the path of any suspected person and if that person stepped into the water the evidence was conclusive against that person. For so everyone knows no self-respecting witch will ever go around water. They always plunge directly into it. And as the roadways in those days were nothing but hills and hollows, and as Mr. Dall always took exceedingly good care to place his witch traps in well concealed hollows in the roadways, he was singularly successful in snaring the nearsighted old ladies, and thereby proving beyond the peradventure of a doubt of their being witches of the deepest dye. By such means as these many old ladies who had lived a lifetime among their neighbors unsuspected of the grave crime of practicing witchcraft were in the twinkling of an eyelid unmasked and shown up in their true colors to the horrified townspeople, and you may be sure that the punishment meted out to them was as varied and as severe as they certainly deserved. For I can tell you that it is no pleasant thing to be changed into a horse and ridden all about the country in a single night by the witches; and I am told that in those days many persons could be produced who would show you scars and bruises upon their bodies which were inflicted by the witches during the time they were transformed into horses and ridden about the country as such.

Another splendid test used by Mr. Dall was to make the suspected witch walk down a lane, for as you must know, a lane is always crossed at its either end by a road, thus forming the letter T, and as this letter bears a resemblance to a cross, no witch of good standing in her community would dare to walk down a lane; thus when a suspect escaped Mr. Dall's water test she was requested to walk down a lane, and if she refused she was rightly judged and treated as a witch. As there was no lane within two miles of the town, and as all the suspected parties were ladies of decidedly ancient origin, and barely able to walk two yards, much less two miles, their emphatic refusal to walk out to and down the lane was rightly judged as complete evidence as to their connection with the witches.

Now, in the spring of the year 1730, a genuine witch scare threw the inhabitants of old Georgetown into a delightfully panicky state. Horses were found in their stables of a morning with their tails and manes plaited—sure evidence of their having been visited by the witches during the night. Hogs were mysteriously afflicted with the colic and other kindred ailments. Barnyard fowls were observed to whirl around on the slightest provocation, and numerous other strange happenings were reported to have occurred at divers times, besides Alexandria had had the previous year quite a busy time with the witches, and perhaps Georgetown was just a little bit jealous of this fact, any way reputable citizens, principally very old men with notoriously poor eyesight, had "seen things," as they expressed it, which would make your "ha'r" stand upon end.

Soon a rumor started that old "Graney" Wendell was practicing witchcraft. Indeed, "Samey" Slater, a member of the town watch, and an octogenarian besides, swore that on a certain night he had seen with his own eyes a figure greatly resembling old "Graney" Wendell's, galloping by, perched on a horse, and when a neighbor's horse was found the next morning with its tail and mane plaited, the townspeople shook their heads knowingly, and said that they had always suspected old Miss Wendell of practicing the black arts. Then came divers old gentlemen who had, on several occasions, particularly noticed old Miss Wendell "cock up" her eyes at a chicken, and almost immediately after, to have seen that unlucky fellow go careening about "like a teetotum." All the folks who had been sick during the previous year now attributed their illness to "spells" which had been cast on them by "Graney," and people who had lost animals or fowls, and vehemently charged the old woman with being directly responsible for their losses.

The good housewife hushed their crying children to sleep at night by threatening them with the presence of old "Graney" Wendell, if they did not instantly cease their noise. They smeared their hearths with goose grease in the form of crosses to keep off the witches, as every one knows that this is an ideal charm against such characters, and when the wind blew and the slates rattled upon the roof, and wild gusts came down the chimneys, scattering the hot ashes about, the good folks drew close to one another, and tremulously whispered in awed tones that "Old Graney" Wendell was abroad this night, and then you may be sure the grease pot was in constant requisition. People who were abroad on such wild nights often saw strange figures flying through the air, sometimes seated gaily astride broomsticks. Indeed, there was no question about the chimney of Silas Perkin's house having been knocked down by a witch's broomstick as she rode through the air one wild and stormy night in the month of March; this remarkable occurrence was witnessed by no less a person than that redoubtable watchman, namely, Samey Slater. Mr. Slater solemnly swore to having witnessed the above occurrence, and furthermore asserted that "Graney" Wendell was the particular witch whose broomstick took such liberties with Mr. Perkin's chimney, and, as Mr. Slater had neared the four-score period, it is to be hoped that he knew—whereof he spoke.

Upon being told of what charge this ancient watchman brought against her, Miss Wendell, instead of denying the accusation, cried out that she was glad that Silas's chimney had fallen, her only regret being that the bricks had

not fallen upon Samey Slater's "dratted" head. Finally things got to such a pass that it was deemed expedient to take active measures with Miss Wendell, and that celebrated authority on witchcraft, Mr. Wesley Dall, was told to get his traps in readiness, and the day and place was appointed for the witch testing of old "Graney" Wendell.

The entire force of the Georgetown watch was called out for the occasion, as "Graney" though old, was still vigorous, and possessed finger nails which had left their marks on a score or more of the town's rising generation; that she would not submit without a struggle was a recognized fact, and the unlucky watch were perfectly confident that the past, present and future of their respective families would lie unveiled as they never were before when they once got old Miss Wendell started.

Promptly at the hour named, the watch, with a brave display of their tipstaves, drew up in front of Miss Wendell's door, where a great crowd had collected to witness the proceedings. Mr. Dall was already prepared to minister the water test, and the mayor had just given the preliminary cough, preparatory to crying "Bring out the witch," when the window shutters of "Graney" Wendell's domicile flew open and that redoubtable person herself appeared at the open window, and, shaking her claw-like fist at the crowd, demanded to know "what in the name of all eternal" they meant by "pestering" her with their "infernal blabbering?"

"You're a witch, you're a witch, 'Old Graney's' a witch," shrieked the children from a safe distance in the rear of the crowd. "Yes, yes," echoed the people, "Bring out the witch and we'll duck her in the pond, and we'll 'bile' her, and we'll burn her," yelled the tender-hearted young urchins, as they danced with glee at the very thought of using the ancient dame to feed a bon-fire with.

During all these hostile manifestations by her townsmen, old Miss Wendell, with wildly gesticulating arms, singled out divers individuals from among the crowd, and with much apparent enjoyment, gave a complete review of their family history, beginning with their grandfathers and working up to the unlucky individual in question, bringing forth an array of discreditable facts that served to delight the crowd and caused the unfortunate subject to wish he or she were anywhere but in the range of old "Graney's" keen eye, and scathing tongue.

But to the merriment of the watch, the ancient dame gave her grandest efforts; persons who had heard her on many previous occasions, were unanimous in their opinions that on this day old "Graney" eclipsed all previous records; Samey Slater, in particular, was scored unmercifully; this gentleman, being the youngest member of the watch, was very unpopular with his fellow watchmen for this reason, the "raking over" given him by old Miss Wendell, was heartily enjoyed by his venerable comrades. For Samey, who was a gay young thing of 77, was considered entirely too "fresh," and needed toning down in the worst way. He was spoken of by his comrades at that "dashing young buck," or "that reckless young devil," etc. He was a scintillating youngster, indeed, caring nothing for the time-honored traditions of watchmen, indeed, if history is to be believed, Samey Slater was known to have, on several occasions, made his rounds after the hour of nine o'clock, when all watchmen of any respectable standing whatever, should have been sleeping peacefully in their boxes. It was strongly suspected and hinted about by the other members of the watch that on these occasions Samey was nosing about after the "kals," "as you'uns will do," they added.

As Miss Wendell absolutely refused to come out peacefully and undergo the water test, it was decided to use force to compel her to do so, and the mayor ordered the watch to seize her and bring her forth instantly. So this ancient and tottering old band of humbugs, forming themselves into a body, entered the house, and for a few minutes thereafter there issued from within a strange mixture of shrieks, groans and curses, but above all the medley of sound could be heard the high, shrill voice of "Graney" Wendell, as she scratched, clawed, kicked and took other personal liberties with the town's guardians.

For a brief space of time, it was a question as to who would come out victorious, Miss Wendell or the watch. Old "Graney's" voice could be heard crying: "Drat you, Billy Thompson, take that," or "Samey Slater, I'll scratch your eyes 'outen' your old head," or "Jimmy Barber, I'll eat your devilish liver," etc., as she bestowed her best endeavors upon the gentlemen so mentioned. But after a bit old "Graney" and the watch all tumbled out into the street together, and "Graney" being pretty thoroughly winded by this time, but still game, was surrounded by the crowd and held. During the struggle with the watch and after the jostling given her by the crowd, forced the old dame clear across the road, and, in the interim, Mr. Dall, had cunningly concealed his basin of water in a deep hollow, immediately in the path of "Graney" when she was given permission to re-enter her house, consequently when the old lady made for her door she stepped directly into the basin of water, and immediately thereupon the evidence being conclusive that she was a witch, she was seized by the angry mob and amid a shower of missiles of all descriptions, was hurried away to the ducking pond.

Arriving at the pond she was given a chance to confess that she was a witch, but indignantly spurning any such offer, she was ducked into the water, and then given another chance, still refusing, she was ducked again and again, until finally, in answer to the question, "Did she own to being a witch?" a nodding motion of her poor old head was taken as an assent to the question, and she was hauled out and

dragged back to her home, being pelted and jeered at all along the way, and then the people, greatly elated over their work, left poor old "Graney" in a semi-conscious condition upon the floor of her home, while they took themselves off to gossip over the matter, and think up new and interesting tortures to be visited upon her on the morrow. But late that night the town was aroused by the cry of fire, and when the folks turned out to fight this dreaded enemy, it was seen to be in the home of old Miss Wendell, and though measures were taken to extinguish the flames, the fire was victorious, and laid in ashes what had once been the home of "Graney" Wendell. The good housewives shook their heads solemnly and declared that old "Graney" had gone to join her friends the witches, and if further testimony were needed to bear out these assertions, the statements of Billy Thompson, Samey Slater and John Barber clinched the matter beyond the peradventure of a doubt, when they one and all solemnly declared to have seen old Mrs. Wendell seated upon a broomstick in company with the evil one himself came soaring up out of the flames and disappearing into the night.

For years and years the site where once stood "Graney's" house was reported to be the favorite meeting place for the witches, and after dark no one, for love or money, could be induced to go anywhere's near there, but as times passed, gradually folks began to forget the occurrence, and it again became a thoroughfare.

Dear, dear me, all this happened years ago, but this was not the last witch of Georgetown, sometime I'll tell you the story of a witch with a wooden leg, who played havoc with the nerves of the good old folks of Georgetown in those by-gone days of long ago.

REVERE RODGERS.

SIDEWALK SKETCHES.

Observations Noted Along the Streets of Washington When Going To and From Our Daily Task.

That procession of young ladies one sees daily on the Avenue is accounted for by the fact that the New Willard Hotel management mailed invitations to the pupils of the several institutions of learning at the National Capital to inspect the handsome hostelry. On my trip through the building I was particularly pleased with everything, except the name. In Washington several prominent structures have, for one reason and another, tacked on the designation "New" as a mark for the eye and ear of the newcomer. There is the New Grand, the New National, and so on, until the word "New" is doing overtime.

So the lady with the pretty name, who contributes a column to The Globe every week, saw fit to repeat some chaff heard by chance in the Exposition City, where she was doing the Pan-American for a number of newspapers.

Having to choose between that wonder spot where nature pours down her inland sea and the fair and radiant maiden whom the angels call Lenore, so far as I was concerned, Niagara went out of business. It was like the case of a noted governor, who claimed that every time he spoke during one campaign he had to play against a circus as a counter-attraction. With plots to portray and pictures to plan.

An hour is such a little span. And the poem? Well, one of these days Lenore may incorporate it in a story in some of the popular 10-cent magazines, for she dabbles in literature in addition to art and theatrics, and does it well, as attested by current issues of Songs and Stories and the Broadway Magazine. A recent Standard devotes a page to photographs of the justly famous model, and styles her "the reigning sensation of the Pan-American." So I see no reason why the talented lady should not note that Miss Lenore White, the lady in question, after a six months' engagement at Buffalo—during which time she created and impersonated scores of living pictures for the delectation of the theatergoers, and contributed a series of illustrated articles to the Sunday press of that city—now, kissing Burlington good-bye, climbs a little higher upon the ladder of fame and enters upon a remunerative metropolitan engagement.

It is a strange phenomenon, and one commented on, why the business streets of cities attract crowds to but one side. In the streets running east and west, like the Avenue and F streets, the crowds favor the north side of the street, and in the streets running north and south, like Seventh and Ninth streets, the throng of shoppers and sightseers take the west side of the street. Who will account for this preference?

It is extremely dangerous for one to perambulate the business streets, or rather the side-walks of such, for one stands an immediate danger of colliding with a show-case or extension shop window. There seems to be little regulation observed in the placing of glass show-cases on the side-walk.

"Beautiful Washington" is an expression, the appropriateness of which one can realize at this season of the year, but the shedding trees in the shady streets litter the sidewalks with their falling leaves and makes pedestrianism somewhat disagreeable. The parks continue a delight, despite the miriads of falling leaves covering grass plot, flower bed and walk.

H. S. SUTTON.

If men will have no care for the future they will soon have sorrow for the past.

The house wherein learning abounds will rise; that in which pleasure prevails will fall.

DANCING SCHOOLS.

Their Demoralizing Character on Young Girls.

THEIR FREE-FOR-ALL "FRIENDS"

Of Both Sexes—Interviews With Teachers, Who Say No Mother Ought to Allow Her Daughter to Attend Them—Some Good Schools, But the Great Majority Are Not Up to the Standard.

A visit to some of the night dancing schools of Washington would probably open the eyes of the mothers of the young damsels taking lessons other than learning how to trip the light fantastic. The male teachers range in age from 18 to 23 years, but is not from these teachers that the greatest danger to the young girls attending the schools come. As a rule the teachers attend strictly to the business end of the Academy and collect their shekels. The young men and women attend the schools dance until midnight from 8 o'clock p. m. But half an hour is allowed for scholars or teaching the art to the new beginners. At 8 o'clock promptly all take the floor and from that hour until midnight the fun is fast and furious, with intervals for liquid refreshments at some cafe or ladies' parlor. Here the young girl learns to drink, maybe for the first time. Then the rag time dance suits her stimulated body and she throws herself heartily into the two-step semiboochy coochy "Chivaree," as the boys call the suggestive dance.

"Yes," said Mr. Harry A. Dunlen, who formerly kept a small private school, "these places are suitably designed to take a young girl along the course. She begins all right, but in numberless cases that I know she winds up the other way. I never knew the mother of any young girl who was ever willing to let her daughter attend these schools. The boys' instinct in this instance is correct. The boys who attend all know that their girl companions are self-willed, disobedient, lassies, inclined to be fast and they soon get them agoing. The restaurant and the wine room in the beginning, and then the assignation house follows in the natural order along the road to ruin. At these schools which are usually opened three nights each week all are acquainted and everything is free and easy; nothing stiff or formal. Except in the so-called 'Chivaree' the dances are decorous enough and the teachers preserve fair order in the school. But the frequent visits across the street or around the corner to liquor up soon wears off all reserve and the girl will go the pace as willingly as her male companion, especially if he is a graceful dancer. These young girls are fairly infatuated with dancing and on the three nights of the week when their particular school is closed up they will attend another school which happens to be opened by pre-arrangement the three alternate nights, so that many of them attend these schools every night in the week."

Said another ex-teacher when asked about the demoralizing effect of these schools and the debauchment of the girls attending them.

"Well, I will give you my experience and you can judge for yourself. The very first night I attended I attracted the attention by my dancing of a very handsome young girl not quite 17. She flirted with me, or rather made eyes and I promptly closed in and asked her to dance. We danced and frequently had refreshments, solids and some liquids, and the result was this—that neither of us went home that night. Now, this experience is nothing unusual. And to show you the class of respectable girls or rather girls of respectable families who attend these schools I have only to state that this girl whom I gallanted for over a year married a decent young fellow, who little dreams that his young wife has had probably more experience than himself with Washington after-midnight!"

Several other tributes to these places as feeders for the assignation house, the wine room and debauchment generally have been offered The Globe, but sufficient has been produced in the foregoing to warn the parents of young damsels who desire permission to attend these schools to deny the same and to prevent, if possible, their daughters from committing moral suicide under the pretense of learning how to dance. No doubt there are properly conducted schools where this graceful accomplishment is taught without danger to the morals of young girls, but that there are many of the other kind, too many in fact, goes without saying and that they are made use of by the male libertines to secure victims for their lusts we have the most indisputable proofs.

The Globe is unable to make any sense out of or find and continuity of the subject a Front Royal correspondent and an ex-C street railroad employe of the Washington Traction Company attempts to write about, on both sides of the sheet of paper. Please write only on one side of the sheet of paper and state the facts simply and plainly.

Is it not about time for Commissioner of Pensions Evans to demand a court of inquiry to establish his innocence of The Globe's charges that he has prostituted his official power to advance the interests of his relatives and friends, discriminated against men with families; favored spinsters and married women; promoted the inefficient and reduced and dismissed the efficient? An honest public official would. But whoever accused Evans of official honesty?

The people are the roots of the State; if the roots are flourishing the State will endure.

Life is a journey, and death a return home.

The straightest trees are the first felled.

The loftiest building arises from small accretions.

It is better to suffer an injury than to commit one.

Kretol

Now that the extreme heat of the Summer is over, and it becomes necessary to guard against the prevailing disease of catarrh, THE KRETOL CHEMICAL CO., at 1224 F Street N. W., has made arrangements to keep a physician at the Institute from 9 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., where people who are suffering from throat trouble, colds, and catarrh may be treated for these affections by the use of

Kretol

Also the Company has Static Electricity. There is no preparation better than

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for sore throat and irritated conditions of the lining membrane of the nose and throat. Use

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John Meinikheim, Seventh Street Northwest.

AN INTERVIEW.

In Which Marylanders Are Accused of Running Mailbag Repair Shop.

"In the Mail Bag Repair Shop a little discrimination recently occurred which I would like to see in The Globe," said a citizen of Maryland last night to the scribe.

"What are the facts?"

"Well, a Mrs. S" left on a European trip last May in company with her daughter and did not return until last week. She is back at work at her old job."

"Yes—anything wrong in this?"

"Wait—now another woman in the same department who was off on two weeks' leave of absence over stayed her time one week."

"Well?"

"She has been asked for her resignation. Is this right? One woman goes to Europe and is absent almost six months, the other overstays her time six days, yet the latter loses her job and the former is retained?"

"No, it is not right—how do you account for it?"

"I would hate to say what I think. This Mail Bag Repair Shop is a Maryland affair anyhow."

"How is that?"

"Oh! Almost all of its three or four hundred employes and all of those who have the best jobs are Marylanders. No other State has a show. Mudd sees to that."

"Who is Mudd?"

"Why, Congressman Mudd, who won such fame in the Census imbroglio, and whose action compelled the State of Maryland to take another census. Mr. Mudd absolutely controls this Department of the Government, and all his henchmen and henchwomen rule the roost in the Mail Bag Repair Shop and monopolize the jobs. They can do as they please, go to Europe or stay at home. It is all the same, they still hold down their jobs. I wish I had been born in Maryland," concluded our informant, with a sigh as he dropped into Whittings for a glass of country cider.