

LEGENDS OF RAMAPO.

TALES OF THE EARLY BLACKS AND THEIR FEAR OF WITCHES—A BAD MAN'S CAVE—"BETTY" SUFFERN'S PATRIOTIC RIDE.

There is more than one kind of legend to be found in the Ramapo Mountains, that series of blue hills which rise suddenly out of the flats along the border line between New-York and New-Jersey. There are many "peaks" of peculiar form, highland lakes of wonderful depth and color, and caves in the rocks, about all of which strange stories should have been handed down. Nor has the opportunity been altogether neglected. For out of this sort have come from the people who once lived on the border, just outside of the mountain district.

The original mountaineers were, for the most part, negroes, for when the farmers freed their slaves the mountains were not settled and the rock-cursed highland was the black man's only refuge. They were there, these negro dependents, suddenly thrown upon their own resources, and carved out miniature farms for themselves. They established families, and having known nothing but Christian names in their condition of servitude, they usually adopted the surnames of their former masters. And it is these "mountain blacks," with their inborn love of mystery and fear of the devil, who have kept alive a spirit of superstition far better than that of the white folk.

"The shadow of Hoven Kaup, as the old Dutch called the peak which towers over the village of Suffern, there stands a quaint and aged hut, built of logs, with the cracks roughly plastered with clay from a neighboring bank. It has been tumbled down for the last twenty years, but manages in some way to hold together and continue the fight against the elements. In this hut there lives blind Owen De Groot, one of the oldest negroes in the Ramapo section. His grandfather was one of the original "mountain niggers," and the superstitions of three generations are pent up within him. His children and their children have gone to school, and therefore belong to another era, so of them nothing more. Old Owen would not be happy if the lower shelf of Hoven Kaup did not form part of his back yard. As it is, he is content to hobble out at his "back" and gaze with eyes that see not in the direction in which he knows the beloved mountains lie, and, calling to his side a hunting dog or two, relics of the good old days when clubs of dog men had not pre-empted all of the hunting ground and fishing waters, he sits in the sun and tells stories to himself. He can remember when wolves howled in the hills at night, when deer were not hard to find, foxes abounded and bears to be had for the seeking. In his mind he hunts these hunters over again, giving shrill orders to his dogs, and at just the right moment bringing down the game with clever imitation of the report of a gun.

He had just shot a wildcat when a visitor came to him a few days ago—that is, he had given himself the pleasure of a dramatic rehearsal of a hunting scene which he had taken up, forty-five years ago. He was ready to go on with a story of how he had cornered a million pigeons over by Nigger Pond, but the stranger demanded legends, and the pigeon story will not be old enough to enter the legend class for another half century.

white settlement where Suffern stands to-day, and she was very much in love with a young white man. He made her jealous and turned the love to hate. He tried every form of repentance without avail. Knowing that he really loved her, Margaret planned a deliberate revenge—she married Jim De Groot, a "mountain nigger," and went back into the hills with him. The lover—but that is the same old story. So much for the preliminaries which sent this white girl into the negro settlement; here is where the vanity object lesson comes in.

"She had not been among the colored folks long," said the old woman who was telling the story, "when she began to be mighty sorry she was white. She saw the nice, shiny brown skin of the other women, and as she was black at heart a black by marriage, she wanted to be black all the rest of the way. She had been vain about her pretty face when she lived among white folks, and she knew if it would turn black she'd be prettier than any of the other women."

But, as most bad men before and since have done, she went too far at last. He was captured and handed in a robbery or murder case, and counts of today differ as to the exact crime—and there was no appeal from the trial. He was sentenced to the gallows, and he was being led to the gallows a neighbor, who had known him when a boy, spoke to him. "Claudius, your poor old mother said you would die with your boots on, and I believe she was right."

But the man simply glared and strode defiantly on to meet death. But he was not yet through with death. As he was being led to the gallows, he turned back and said to the man who had spoken to him: "I'll go for the nalls," said Betty. "You couldn't stand the long ride to Bordentown," said her father, for the distance must have been seventy miles.

"Do let me carry them. I want to do something for my country and this is my first chance. I have a 'Ye hiding place'." The general smiled and shook his head. "I could never forgive myself if they brought you harm," he said. "I will put them in my stocking," said Betty, with just a trace of a blush. "They will be safe there."

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heart beat in mad fear. Then she thought of her smile and used it on the officer. He hesitated. "Let the pretty little devil go," he ordered finally. "Betty rode home and the dispatches were sent on to their destination. After the war she married a soldier and moved to the West, where several children today tell of their grandmother's ride."

HE HAS HOPES FOR DEMOCRACY.
RABBI FLISCHER OF BOSTON, THINKS IT WILL PRESERVE THE COUNTRY.
Rabbi Charles Flischer, of Boston, delivered an address yesterday before the League for Political Education, at No. 23 West Fourth-st. His theme was "Democracy." He said in part: Democracy ought, it seems to me, to be with us in America, a sort of religion. I do not mean that it should be a religion organized by the State, but organized by some of the people for the State. There are many people who have outgrown, or are outgrowing, their former beliefs, and yet who are as earnestly desirous of doing good as ever were those who held most rigidly to the old beliefs. There are pure and lofty souls who are looking for some opportunity of serving their fellow men, who yet cannot work under the old forms to the best advantage. I cannot but hope that it will not be very long before some great leader, some genius, will arise who shall lead us in the organization of a church of democracy. I see one of those who felt that democracy was doomed, owing to our treason to fundamental principles three years ago, two years ago and to-day. Yet I have come to believe that this is merely an incident in the life of a people—a kind of coffee so to speak. I believe that this country is likely to be a mission nation among the countries of the world, just as the Hebrew nation was. But I do not believe that the time has

A NEGRO HUT AT THE FOOT OF THE RAMAPO MOUNTAINS. Where lives Owen De Groot, a believer in witches and their masters.



A PART OF THE RAMAPO RANGE. Hoven Kaup, of negro witch fame, in the foreground.

CLAIMANT OF TITLE DISCHARGED.
Nicholas Erona Saome, the Russian who was arrested on the steamer La Gasconne, and who claims the title of Count de Toulouze Lautrec, was discharged yesterday after a short examination by United States Commissioner Shields. Charles I. Schampain, counsel for the prisoner, moved for his discharge on the ground that the government had no papers or warrants showing that the defendant had committed any act against the laws of this country. Commissioner Shields at first decided to continue the examination until next Tuesday, but Mr. Fox, the representative of the British Consul, who was present, urged the detention of the prisoner, but a few minutes later a telegram was received by him from the Canadian authorities stating that they would take no steps to extradite the defendant back to Canada for trial. Thereupon Commissioner Shields discharged the prisoner.

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WEDDING GIFTS A SPECIALTY.

which had eluded his quest in California, and in 1882 he came upon the United Verde copper mine. It had been located by some poor prospector, who had no conception of its value. It was while the controversy was going on as to whether the mine should be sold to the United Verde or to the United Verde and the United Verde copper belt of Arizona, and Professor Treadwell believed that the whole copper belt was dotted underneath with deposits of rich United Verde in extent and richness, and so, while Senator Clark was making the most of the two hundred acres which comprise the United Verde property, Professor Treadwell employed himself in quietly gathering together the fourteen hundred acres which constitute what he believes to be the choice part of the copper belt between Senator Clark's two properties, the United Verde and Equator Hill—and recently the Professor has united all these properties in one organization to which he has given his name—George A. Treadwell Mining Company.

A BIG SWEETBREAD TREE.
The greatest theft of sweetbreads that probably ever occurred has taken place in the last two months. In which time John Wissman, who keeps an establishment at No. 20 Washington Market, has been the loser of 4500 dozen of sweetbreads, worth \$2500. Two of the drivers of wagons owned by Mr. Wissman—Peter Brown, of No. 135 East Fifty-second-st., and John Sharkey, of No. 830 East Fifty-third-st.—were arrested, together with Joseph Woteler, of No. 30 East Fifty-sixth-st., on Friday, and accused of the crime.

KANSAS RESOLUTIONS FILED.
MAYOR VAN DYKE HAS THEM PLACED WITH OTHER CITY RECORDS.
In commemoration of the landing of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, in this city, fifty years ago, a delegation from the quitted Hungarian societies called on Mayor Van Dyke yesterday and asked that a set of engrossed resolutions they had prepared be placed on file with the other records of the city. Mayor Van Dyke ordered the resolutions to be received and filed. The resolutions relate to the arrival of Kossuth's arrival practically as an outcast; of his hospitable reception in the United States; and of the presence and the continued allegiance of the Hungarian-Americans to the institutions of their adopted country. The resolutions were handsomely bound with the Hungarian national colors of red, green and white. The Hungarian societies are to hold an entertainment and reception to-night at the Lenox Lyceum.

MAINE SHIPBUILDING.
A TOTAL TONNAGE FOR THE YEAR OF 44,221—PROSPERITY IN THE SHIPYARDS.
Bangor, Me., Dec. 7 (Special).—Maine shipbuilders have this year launched new vessels aggregating 44,221 net register tons, and the list includes, besides some of the largest and finest four masted and five masted schooners afloat, two splendid steel ships, the Acme and the William P. Frye, the former of which is now racing from New-York to Shanghai with the British bark Brilliant. No bark or barkentine are built nowadays, and no brig has been launched on the Atlantic coast of the United States since 1888. The chief demand now is for large schooners, and there are many in the new fleet with a carrying capacity of between 200 and 300 tons dead weight. Last year Maine built the first two masted schooner in the world—the George W. Wells and the Eleanor A. Percy—and in 1902 she will turn out two more. The tonnage launched this year in the various districts of the State is as follows: Bath, 27,282; Waldoboro, 4,821; Belfast, 4,022; Machias, 1,822; Castine, 1,659; Kennebec, 65; Wiscasset, 32; Portland, 24; Passamaquoddy, 67; Frenchman's Bay, 12; total, 44,221. There are now on hand at Bath contracts for about 25,000 tons of new merchant shipping, and a 2,500 ton schooner is to be launched in a few weeks that is not included in the above list. In other parts of the State business promises well, and it is likely that in 1902 Maine will launch not far from 50,000 tons of merchant vessels, steam and sail. Wages in the shipyards are good, and general prosperity rules.