

GOD'S FIRST TEMPLE.

CAN THE OLD TIME CAMP MEETINGS BE REVIVED?

One Who Has Attended Many of Them Thinks Not—They Belonged to a Peculiar Age—Cane Ridge, Ky., in 1801. All the Conditions Are Changed.

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HE camp meeting is a purely American institution. It grew up naturally in a new country covered in most parts with a primeval forest and inhabited by a fiercely energetic but uncultured people. It flourished as long as forests, primitive society and old methods of life and travel prevailed, and now that church edifices abound, while primeval forests are rare, the camp meeting is fast passing away.

The year 1801 is taken by consent as that of the first great camp meeting. It was the famous one of Cane Ridge, Ky., where 20,000 people assembled and a dozen preachers were holding forth from as many stumps at one time. Unlearned and unlearned, narrow and unlearned, believing to the extreme in the very letter of the Scripture and untroubled by doubts or "reconstruction" or "higher criticism," they stood in the fields of God's first temples and painted the delights of heaven and the horrors of hell in rude language to ruder congregations. About 2,000 persons were converted at that meeting, and there Peter Cartwright, a wild boy of sixteen, first fell under conviction.

According to his account, he resisted the Spirit for awhile, and danced, drank and gambled harder than ever. But he yielded at last, was converted, sold his favorite race horse, burned his cards, forswore whisky and dancing forever, and entered the ministry in 1803. For over fifty years he was a presiding elder and attended more camp meetings, conducted more revivals and probably preached more sermons in the woods and in log cabins than any other man of the century. He saw his branch of the Methodist church grow from 72,814 members to over 1,750,000.

Born in Virginia in 1785, he died in Sangamon county, Ill., in 1872, but as early as twenty years before his death he journeyed at the old spirit's home from the camp meetings. It is just as well, no doubt, the lonely life of the pioneers predisposed them to gloomy reveries. They were impressed with the fierce Calvinism of nature. They saw the wild beasts in the woods, devoid of mercy or pity and believed in total depravity. They dreaded the serpent lurking in the grass and believed in a personal devil. However earnest their souls to seek, was the manuscript authentic? Is the text properly translated? The question each one asked himself while listening to Cartwright was this: "Am I doomed to howl through all eternity in sulphurous flames in the company of devils and snakes?"

No wonder they pleaded for mercy with a loud conviction of sin. No wonder they shouted for joy when the witness of peace was given till they could be heard a mile, or fell in ecstatic convulsions and lay on their sides as if they were many miles away. Of course they were many unbelievers, and the fidelity of that time was of a coarse and soiling kind. These who embraced religion became fanatically devout; those who resisted the Spirit plunged all the deeper into desperate wickedness. If a young man was above average in talent and of a bold and ardent temperament it was a serious question whether he would turn one way and become a preacher or the other way and become a gambler or even a horse thief.



PETER CARTWRIGHT.

For the first twenty years or so of the camp meeting age the phenomena were such as cannot be easily believed. Hundreds fell under "the power" at a single meeting, and on recovering told of having visited heaven and conversed with the Saviour or the angels. Strangest of all was the affliction called by the people (in Kentucky and Indiana as yet) the "mourners"—those under conviction of sin. Then by a sort of magnetic sympathy it struck all sorts of people. Fashionable young ladies, whose thoughts were on anything but religion, would look on awhile at the "seekers" around the altar and then, being suddenly seized, would bound headforemost into the area before the stand and hurl themselves violently from side to side till ribbons, bows,

combs and jewelry were scattered in all directions.

Young men who went forward to remove sisters or sweethearts from the "mourners' bench" were often seized, and many instances occurred where such fellows swore at every jerk, but could not stop it. This strange affliction ended suddenly, and from 1830 forward the phenomena most noted were trances and rigidity "under the power," as it was called. In 1851 I saw a very strong man fall in that state and was afterward told that he lay rigid for fourteen hours. At that meeting, which was in Parke county, Ind., I heard Richard Hargrave preach a sermon that for vivid word painting excelled anything reported of Starr King, Wendell Phillips or Bob Ingersoll, and immediately after it came a description of hell by another revivalist which set a dozen women to screaming as if in mortal agony.

Hargrave was long a contemporary of Cartwright, and like him was converted in boyhood and preached all the rest of his life, but outlived the other several years. Partly contemporary with them, but attaining prominence after them, was Aaron Wood, D. D., who was focused to exhort at eighteen and served in the regular ministry fifty-five years. He was a singular and writer as well as a preacher, and such to some extent was Richard Hargrave. These two were the prominent figures at camp meetings of my boyhood days.

It is idle to argue the merits of the old time camp meeting of the west and south—it was a necessity. If the pioneer preacher, rude and untaught as he often was, had not followed up the pioneer settlers of Indiana, Kentucky and adjacent states; if he had not roused their hopes and fears with his rude eloquence—metaphorically "shaking them right over the white hot caverns of hell," as the phrase then was—there would have been widespread moral decay. It did not lack much of it as it was, and if the Cartwrights, the Hargraves and their sort had not believed every word of their fiery theology they could have done nothing. Such men as Professor Briggs and Dr. Patton would have paid the pioneers to sleep. In the expressive slang of the west, they "might as well have sung psalms to a dead horse."

But the camp meeting preachers of 1820-55 believed every word of the New Testament in its literal sense, and it



WORTHY STYLE OF CAMP MEETING.

was like fire in their bones. It was not cold, intellectual reasoning; it was not just believing, and like an electric bolt it went from the preacher's heart to the hearer's. And all the surroundings were calculated to excite the emotions. Even now I can shut my eyes, and see the old camp ground of 1827-28—the square focused by the log tents, the tall trees and overshadowing canopy formed by the dense foliage of August, the end log pulpit in front of the preacher's tent, in front of it the open space "around the altar," and then on the long rows of seats under the trees, on which the numerous candles in tin brackets flared and spattered, casting a financial glare upon the beaming faces below.

There was a song, then a prayer, then another and always more inspiring song. Then Richard Hargrave took the stand and for an hour poured forth all the intensity of his soul. His high, white and smooth forehead became crimson, his ordinarily soft eye lighted with a sort of scintillating glare, his white hair started to vibrate and sway with a sort of magnetic energy, and when he closed every eye in the audience was fixed, every mind opened to emotional influences. Then from the women's side of the square rose in quivering strains some suggestive hymn, probably these lines of truly awful import to the believer:

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save,
And life to be busy.

We looked up through the leafy canopy and still night air, seeing a single star here and there among the leaves, and God seemed very, very great and severe; we looked at the powerful character who always followed Hargrave and he seemed very, very near. I cannot repeat the lurid descriptions I heard, though I can remember some of them word for word. Nearly all readers would laugh at the idea that a boy could remember such things; the rest would say such things were never uttered. Yet I know what I know. Another song then loud cries, mingled with exhortations, songs and prayers of such energy that it would seem they might assuage the skies and prevail even upon the unchangeable majesty of heaven.

"The word of God mightily grew and prevailed." And to wonder. Now, suppose some coldly cautious scholar had told those people that there was a question as to the authenticity of the Epistles to the Hebrews, that commentators were in doubt whether Moses or Ezra wrote the Pentateuch, and whether Isaac was a monograph or a compilation; that the serpent in Eden was an allegory; that the devil is not mentioned in the Old Testament and, but enough. Long before he reached the distinction between Satan and the devil he would have had the trees for his audience. The wilder part of the audience would have been—well, in those days every suitable spring branch had a stillhouse. No; the old fashioned and lurid camp meeting was a social and moral necessity.

J. H. BEADLE.

SELECTIONS

ARE SUICIDES INSANE?

Judges Have Decided So, but the Question Is Still an Open One.

Is suicide evidence of insanity? The question involves a discussion not easily handled. The most vital instinct in man is the preservation of life. It would seem therefore that an act which traverses the first law of nature must emanate from a disordered brain.

Not long ago a judge in one of our New York courts held that suicide per se was evidence of insanity. On the other hand, we have the examples of eminent men who have taken their own lives under circumstance which appear to leave no room for doubt as to their sanity.

A dispatch from Roumania informs us of a suicide club, the members of which are pledged to commit suicide as soon as their names should be drawn. The surviving members of the club have all been placed in rigid confinement, and will be tried on the charge of having deliberately aided and abetted unjustifiable suicide.

It is worthy of note that the greatest number of suicides are committed by Germans. The form of death they choose is usually poisoning.

In every country three-quarters of all the suicides are of the male sex.

It is almost impossible to realize the readiness with which the Chinese commit suicide. It requires the merest trifling to induce a Chinaman to hang himself. In other countries, when a man wishes to avenge himself on an enemy he kills him. In China he kills himself.

Suicides of widows are very common there. Many hang themselves publicly, having given notice of their intention, so that those who wish may be present.

On the morning of the appointed day the willing victim, dressed in gaily apparel and holding a bouquet of fresh flowers in her hand, is carried in a sedan chair to the temple erected in memory of "virtuous and filial widows." There she performs the accustomed religious rites, with burning candles and incense. In the afternoon she returns home and hangs herself before the multitude. Suicides of this kind meet with general approval in China. They do honor to the families in which they occur.

The first instance of suicide recorded in Scripture is that of Samson (B. C. 1175). The second is that of Saul (B. C. 1055). Rather than fall into the hands of the Philistines, when hard pressed to battle, he drew his sword and fell upon it, and so died. Judas Iscariot, through remorse, went and hanged himself.

Among the philosophers of antiquity Seneca stands pre-eminently forward as the defender of suicide. He says: "Does life please you? Live on. Does it not? Go from whence you came. No vestige of world is necessary; a mere punishment will secure your liberty."

Two of the most distinguished men of antiquity who sacrificed their own lives were Brutus and Cassius. Marc Anthony, reduced to a desperate extremity, killed himself. Cleopatra was taken prisoner by Augustus, who had intended to exhibit her in a triumphal procession in Rome. To frustrate this design she killed herself by the poison of an asp. Caligula, when under the despotism of Caesar, stabbed himself, and when the wound had been staunchured off the bandages and accomplished his purpose.

Demosthenes, fearful of being subjected to slavery and disgrace, resorted to self destruction. The prosecution to which Hannibal was subjected by the Romans impelled him to have recourse to the poison which he always kept about him in a ring. Socrates, the renowned Athenian orator, strangled himself to death sooner than submit to the dominion of Philip of Macedon.

From instances like the foregoing one might well query whether the act of taking one's life is alone sufficient to justify insanity.—Albany Argus.

Work of a Thunderbolt.

One of the most interesting strokes of lightning on record occurred at Bourges, France, on May 4. On that day eighteen men of the Thirtieth regiment of artillery were marching in the polygon outside of Bourges under the conduct of Chief Artificer Dequvais. A heavy shower made them run for shelter, but in doing so a flash of lightning literally mowed them down, with the exception of Dequvais, who marched behind. The first three ranks quickly regained their feet, but four men remained insensible and were carried to the hospital, where one, named Bonnet, died. A little while ago, a lightning bolt struck a vicar's house, as usual, and his boots burst open.

Bonnet was struck on the head, and his head and hair were burned. The discharge passed by the right ear to the shoulder and left hand, then down the inner side of his left leg. The iron nails of the boot made a good contact with the ground; but the leather of the sole appears to have offered great resistance, for the discharge left the boot at a point between the heel and the upper.—London Globe.

Wearing Yachting Caps.

The large number of yachting caps seen in up town resorts nowadays might naturally give rise to the belief that the city is full of yachtsmen, and that the popular cause for yachting is on the increase. A very sally and cynical yachtsman, in a recollection of a well known up town cafe the other afternoon, and concluding as follows upon the appearance of a group of young men, each of whom wore a yachting cap: "I will wager a bottle of wine to a glass of water that not one person in that party knows a grain of from a two-horn bit. Probably some of the men has ever been on a cruise. Your genuine yachtsman does not wear his yachting cap on shore."—New York Times.

He Was Satisfied with That.

A school inspector was examining a class in grammar, and trying to elucidate the complex relations of adjectives and nouns by a telling example.

"Now, for instance," said he, "what am I?"

That was an easy question, and all the children shouted, "A noun!" and then looked around triumphantly, as much as to say, "ask another."

"Yes, but what else?" said the inspector.

This was not so easy, but after a pause a boy ventured to suggest, "A little man."

"Yes, but there is something more than that."

This was a poser, but at last an infant phenomenon almost leaped from his seat in his eagerness and cried, "Please, sir, I know, sir—an ugly little man!"—Boston Globe.

Of More Importance.



Pat—Phew! the me galluses? Mary Ann—Shure an Oi have them on. It's the shoyles Oi have to keep up, Patsy!

Pat—Well, yez land them over. Oi have something of more importance than the shoyles to keep up.—Truth.

Trustworthy Guardian.

The man in the bathing suit turned to the "rascal," rejected looking party in brown jeans who was longing against the railing at the nataborium and said: "Swimming is a glorious sport."

"I reckon," answered the other. "That's what they say."

"Can't you swim?"

"Not a lick."

"You are here as a spectator, I presume?"

"Me?" said the first looking man, with a dreary yawn. "Course not, I'm hired to look after the swimmers an see that they don't get drowned."—Chicago Tribune.

Force of Habit.

There was a funny scene on a crowded Convention car a few days since. A lady passenger asked the conductor:

"Does this car go up Main street?"

"No, madame."

"But I really think it does."

"No, ma'am, I'm sure it does not."

"I was informed that it did," expressed the lady.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the conductor, pulling out a roll of bills from his vest pocket: "I'll bet you—"

Then he recovered himself, blushed and beat a hasty retreat. He was a Kentucky from away back.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Not the Same.

A former slightly acquainted with some English language cannot always place so much reliance on its synonyms as the dictionary seems to promise.

A tutor has revealed the effort of a young German, a student of English, to translate the famous lines:

Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream!

The young man's translation read:
Tell me not in sadful poetry
Life is the larger end of a vain machine.

—Youth's Companion.

A Fatal Error.

Briggs—That was a bad mistake Pringle made, was 'it, of marrying a girl who made all her own gowns?

Griggs—Why, I should think she would make just the right kind of a wife.

Briggs—Not much. The first week after they were married she opened accounts with three dressmakers.—Life.

They Are All Alike.

Smart Errand Boy—Is Mr. Southerford in?

Clerk—No, but I expect him in every minute.

Smart Errand Boy—That so? Well, he'll have to be awful numerous, won't he, to come in every minute?—Boston Courier.

The Philosophy of It.

Yakobly—Doesn't you think you could live up less expensive, even had better be the work instead of by the meal?

Mudge—Yes, I suppose I could, but it's a heap easier to pay for one meal than for twenty-one of 'em.—Indianapolis Journal.

Seeing the End.

He (at the boy)—That's a pretty gown you have on.

She—Yes, and quite successful. I have had three proposals in this gown.

He—What will you do when it is worn out?—Cleveland Review.

Differences.

"Why don't you eat your crackers, Jack?" "I don't like crackers." "Why, you ate three a little while ago." "Yes, but that was between meals. I like everything then."—Harper's Young People.

The Pay and the Watch.

"I have a notion to break your face," said the boy to his watch.

"You may even do that," said the watch bravely, "but you can't ever make me run."—Indianapolis Journal.

In the Orchard.

He—How the trees are morning and dipping to-day.

She—So would you if you were as full of green apples as they are.—Life.



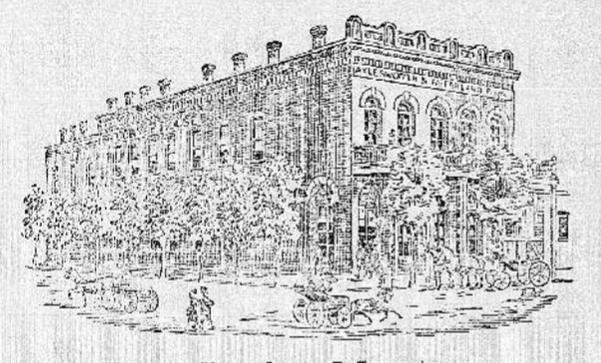
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