

VANQUISHED A SPOOK

BILL SCROGGINS DID IT AND THEN DISAPPEARED.

The Singular History of a Peculiar Character Who Located Wells For Missouri Farmers and Juggled With Trained Snakes.

Rev. Bill Scroggins was a character in a border county of Missouri in 1844. How he acquired the ecclesiastical prefix and what he did under the title were stories which used to be told in the farmhouses of what is now known as Cass county.

They said he had been a snake charmer when he was a young man, that he traveled about the country as a sort of magician and that he showed farmers with his divining rod where to dig wells.

The people of what was then a frontier country assembled once a year in their respective communities and held camp meetings. On one of these religious occasions Bill followed the crowd with his bag of reptiles.

In spite of the protest of the minister the people turned out to the live snake show, and Bill gave them an exhibition which was a great success. It is said, or it used to be said, that there wasn't a snake trick which Bill Scroggins' serpents didn't do.

When he called, his first question was, "Have you got a well?" If the reply was in the negative, and wells were scarce, Bill informed the member that he must have one located, and then he opened his bag of snakes and as they began crawling Bill lifted up his voice and called the people to repentance.

It was a tax on human belief, but the Missourian who told the story vouched for the truth of his assertion that the people gave Bill more orders than he could fill in one season and that he broke up the camp meetings.

When the fame of Rev. Bill Scroggins had spread abroad, it was suggested that he travel over the Bear creek road and try his hand on the spirit. Bill accepted the call. He made a number of journeys before the ghost materialized, and there were people who began doubting the existence of the ghost, while others cited Rev. Bill as one who could overcome anything, and by that token he had made the ghost take to the woods.

However, the ghost showed up one night in the midst of a storm and challenged Rev. Bill to ride for his life. The snake ecclesiastic, who had been there was a contest in which Bill's horse was killed, and he was left afoot. The ghost got the bag of snakes and escaped to the ford, where Bill overtook him on the following day, and the contest was renewed.

Bill returned in triumph to the county seat and told the story. It was received with some doubt, but as years slipped by and nobody was chased people began to believe Bill, and apologetic came in rather late. But Bill was vindicated. Then he mysteriously disappeared.

Some years later a den of snakes was discovered in what is now Bates county, Mo., the adjoining county on the south to Cass, and in this den was discovered the skeleton of a man. In the opinion of many the skeleton was none other than that of Rev. Bill Scroggins. So well was his memory revered that the bones were collected from the snake den, and when the first courthouse was built in Cass county, it is said, they were placed in a box under the cornerstone and were found three years after when the old courthouse was demolished.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Wounded in Battle. An army loses far more of its strength through its wounded than through its killed. In the first place there are four or five wounded to one killed, and in the second place the dead men give no trouble, while the wounded require an immense number of noncombatants to attend to them. A great many of the wounded return again to duty, their wounds being comparatively slight, but as a rule more than half of them take no more part in the war.—London Answers.

The Poet's Choice. "I don't care for your poem," "The Song of the Lark," remarked the editor. "The poet sighed wearily. "To tell the truth," he replied, "I myself much prefer the lay of the hen."—Philadelphia Record.

Among birds the swan lives to be the oldest, in extreme cases reaching 300 years. The falcon has been known to live over 102 years.

The average duration of marriages in England is 28 years; in France and Germany, 20; Norway, 24; Russia, 30.

SCIENCE OF DREAMS.

Results of a Series of Experiments by a German Professor.

Sleep is not "the brother of death," as the poets have said from Homer to Shelley; but, on the contrary, "sleep is the brother of life."

The professor obtained, as he writes at length, the following results: (1) We dream throughout the whole of our sleep, even in that deepest sleep which we imagine to be "dreamless."

There is an intimate connection between the depth of our sleep and the character of our dreams. The deeper the sleep the further back travels the retrospect into the past experiences of life and also the more remote are the contents of the dream from reality.

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THE STONE OF GRATITUDE.

An Old Roman Legend That Treats of the Topaz.

The topaz is called the stone of gratitude, and the old Roman books record the following legend from which the stone derives this attribute:

The blind Emperor Theodosius used to hang a brazen gong before his palace gates and sit beside it on certain days, hearing and putting to rights the grievances of any of his subjects.

One day a great snake crept up to the gate and struck the brazen gong with her coils, and Theodosius gave orders that one should molest the creature and bade her tell him her wish. The snake bent her crest lowly in homage and straightaway told the following tale:

Her nest was at the base of the gateway tower, and while she had gone to find food for her young brood a strange beast covered with sharp needles had invaded her home, killed the nestlings and now held possession of the little dwelling. Would Caesar grant her justice?

The emperor gave orders for the porcupine to be slain and the mother to be restored to her desolate nest. Night fell, and the sleeping world had forgotten the emperor's kindly deed, but with the early dawn a great serpent glided into the palace, up the steps and into the royal chamber and laid upon each of the emperor's closed eyes a gleaming tope. When Emperor Theodosius awoke, he found he was no longer blind, for the mother snake had paid her debt of gratitude.—Exchange.

Doesn't Travel For Fun. Far from being the great autocrat, the arbiter of things of magnitude, the president of a railway system, be it great or small, is a dealer in trifles with a consideration for everything.

When you see the bright, smooth running traveling palaces of the railway president trilling along behind the long string of passenger coaches, you can be safe in the opinion that the occupant has not the softest snap on earth. You can also rest assured that if he is a success in his sphere he is not traveling for fun.—Omaha World-Herald.

A Model of Joy. The artist placed the easel in front of his model and worked away rapidly on his allegorical picture of "Joy."

"Uncle Ephraim," he said, "if this picture is a success I shall give you, besides the half dollar I promised, the finest and plumpest young pullet in the market."

"I really don't understand, Lady Churchill, why or how it is that American ladies refuse to enter political life in their own country, but overwhelm us here in England."

"That is because you have never traveled in the United States. The men there are so intelligent and patriotic that they do not require the services of our sex as an educating force."—Saturday Evening Post.

Honors Easy. "The audience was a trifle severe in its comments on the essay your wife read."

A PLUNGE TO DEATH.

SAM PATCH'S FAMOUS JUMP OVER THE GENEESE FALLS.

The Last of a Sensational Series of Daring Feats Which Might Have Resulted Differently but For a Bottle of Brandy.

Nov. 13, 1829, Sam Patch lost his life in jumping from a scaffold 25 feet above the brink of the Genesee falls into the abyss below. He undertook to jump in all a distance of 125 feet.

Of course the whole population of Rochester as well as the farmers from neighboring villages were upon the scene. The fame of Patch had for several weeks been a topic of conversation among the early settlers.

Patch was born in Rhode Island in 1807. Soon after he removed to Pater-son, N. J., at which place in 1827 he was seized with the jumping mania.

After giving several daring exhibitions in New Jersey he decided to try his luck at Niagara falls two years later. In October, 1827, he jumped from a shelving rock between Goat island and the gurgling waters many feet below.

A few days later he started the natives by jumping from the old Fitzhugh street bridge at dawn. He swam under the water to a convenient hiding place, where he had much amusement in watching several boats crowded with people dragging for his body.

With such a record it is no wonder that on the morning of Nov. 13 all the muddy roads leading to Rochester were thronged with people desirous of seeing the wonderful jumper. Even if farmers were unusually busy securing the last of their harvests they found time to take a day or two off in order to witness the feats of Sam Patch.

Several boats brought hundreds of visitors in holiday attire from Canada, Oswego and Lewiston. Buffalo, Canandaigua and Batavia were almost depopulated on account of the exodus to Rochester. The few taverns in the city turned guests away, and many had to camp overnight.

Notwithstanding the raw, cold weather throngs of settlers lined the banks below the falls. Although Sam said he did not feel the cold weather, he was pleased to fortify himself with a drink of brandy tendered to him by his friend, William Cochrane. Several of the spectators contributed a unique uniform. Dressed in white trousers decorated with a black silk band, they tied around his body, surmounted by a light woolen jacket and skullcap, Sam must have presented a grotesque appearance.

After taking another drink from the flask Sam made the following speech to the thousands of breathless spectators: "Napoleon was a great man and a great general. He conquered armies, and he conquered nations. But he couldn't jump the Genesee falls. We, the people of the Genesee falls, and I do not mean to do it, and I do not mean to do it."

Although Sam Patch could jump the Genesee falls when he was sober, he could not do it when he felt the effects of the brandy. Owing to this fact he met his death when he took the jump. When the thousands of silent and horror-stricken spectators saw Sam strike the water, they did not see him come to the surface. His descent was so unlike his previous efforts, when he shot like an arrow from a bow, that the spectators were certain that he met his death when he reached the water and the jagged, piercing rocks beneath.

The spectators searched in vain for the jumper. The torches of the searchers along the river bank and those of the searchers who dragged the river in boats lit up the river during the long night hours. Amid the roar of the cataract the sorrowing multitude shed tears for the jolly good fellow who, on many others, loved his bottle on occasions.

Notwithstanding the rumors that Sam Patch had been seen alive in Rochester nothing was heard of him until St. Patrick's day, when his body was found in a cake of ice near the mouth of the Genesee. His remains were buried in the cemetery at Charlotte. Although it had been the ambition of Sam Patch to be buried in the city of Rochester, he met his death in the city of Rochester.

Indeed, the event produced a profound impression upon the people of those days. On the following Sunday the preachers in Rochester and neighboring towns could not say enough against the evils of jumping. Some even went as far as Josiah Bissell, who told the pupils of the Third church Sunday school that because they saw the fatal leap they were accessories to his death and were murderers in the sight of God.—Rochester Herald.

Not Up on Stocks. "Shakespeare may have thought he knew it all when he said, 'There is a tide in the affairs of men that, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,' but he didn't know anything about the stock market," growled the shorn lamb, who had loaded up at the foot of the price, only to be wiped out at the deep, low ebb.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Logical. "What is a furrier, Tommy?" asked the teacher of a pupil in the juvenile class. "A man who deals in furs," answered Tommy.

"That's right," said the teacher. "Now, Tommy, you may tell me what a currier is."

"A man who deals in cures," was the unexpected but logical reply.—Chicago News.

The Coldest Country. The coldest inhabited country appears to be the province of Werchojan, in northern Siberia. A Russian savant passed one entire year in the inhospitable region and kept a daily record of the temperature, from which it appears that the daily mean of the entire year is 2.74 degrees below zero.

IN THE BABY'S EYES.

What is the dream in the baby's eyes? As he lies and blinks in a mute surprise, With little we hands that aimlessly go, Hither and thither and to and fro, With little, wee feet that shall lead him? God knows.

But a prayer from my heart like a benison goes. Bundle of helplessness, yonder he lies. What is the dream in my baby's eyes? What does he wonder and what does he know? That we have forgotten so long, long ago? Bathed in the dawn light, what does he see? That alone have hidden from you and me? Out of the yesterday seeth he yet? The things that in living he soon shall forget, All that is hidden by the blue skies. What is the dream in my baby's eyes?

Speak to me, little one, ere you forget. What is the thought that is lingering there yet. Where is the land where the yesterdays meet, Waiting and waiting the morrows to greet? You see, funny bundle, who only will blink, What do you wonder, and what do you think? Bright as the moonlight asleep in the skies, What is the dream in my baby's eyes? —Tom Corry in Minneapolis Messenger.

NEVER ATE FOREIGN MEAT.

It Doesn't Pay to Be Too Sure Until One Knows All the Facts. A certain Major Brownjohn, who made it his boast that he never allowed American or colonial meat to be served at his table, recently visited an old comrade in Liverpool. One night at dinner a most delicious saddle of (apparently) Welsh mutton appeared, to which the major did ample justice.

"Ah," he observed, "I wish that my butcher in London would send me stuff like that, and yet he deals only in the best British meat."

"Well," said his friend, "as a matter of fact you have been eating New Zealand mutton. But it's only fair to say that I get it from a friend who is a large wholesale importer."

"By Jove, you don't say so!" exclaimed the guest. "I wish he'd tell me where I can get the like in town."

"I'll send you a card," said the host. The visit was duly paid to the meat monger, who smiled when he heard the Londoner's eulogy and explanation.

"Tell me," he returned after listening to the epicure's remarks, "in what part of London you reside, and I dare say I can give you the address of a retail butcher who will supply you with exactly the same sort of mutton as that which you like so much."

"Ah," observed the importer, "there's the very man within two streets of your house. We supply him with all his meat. Here's his address," he added, handing a slip of paper to the seeker after succulent joints.

The major read, the major started, the major frowned, the major, truth to say, flew into a rage, and no wonder, for the address was that of his own butcher, who dealt only in home produced.—London Sketch.

The Bottle at Ship Launches. Down to Charles II's time it was customary to name and baptize a ship after she was launched, sometimes a week or two after. The old Tudor method used for men-of-war was still in use. Peppy's "Diary" shows that. The ship was safely got afloat, after which some high personage went on board with a special silver "standing cup," or "dagon" of wine, out of which he drank, naming the ship and pouring a libation on the quarter deck. The cup was then generally given to the dockyard shipwright as a memento.

Who did the presage of naming and baptizing a ship before she is sent afloat come in? I trace the last explicit mention of the old method to 1664, when the Royal Katherine was launched (see Peppy's). The first mention of smashing a bottle of wine on the bows of an English man-of-war that I have found is in a contemporary newspaper cutting of May, 1780, describing the christening of H. M. S. Magnanime at Deptford, but nothing is hinted that it was then a new custom.—Notes and Queries.

To Fly in Your Dreams. There is a peculiarity about the flying dream that seems to be constant. Of all those whom I asked about the matter and who are conscious of the flying dream at all not one has ever known himself to make any high flights his dreams. One always flies low, with a skimming manner, slightly, but only slightly, above the heads of pedestrians.

And one's critical attitude in a dream toward one's own performance is always interesting to note, both in regard to this particular class of dream and even more toward one of the other classes. It is an attitude that is well brought out in "Alice in Wonderland," where Alice made to exclaim or to think while she is falling, "How brave they will all think it of me at home not to mind a great fall like this!"—Longman's.

Caused a Slight Family Jar. "Maria, did you read about that Philadelphia woman who was cured of her mental troubles by fasting 45 days? I believe such a treatment would cure that unhappy temper of yours."

"Yes, it would make an angel of me. Is that what you would like, John Billus?"—Exchange.

A Sure System. "I got back at the bookmakers all right today!" "Win?" "No; didn't bet."—Philadelphia North American.

A Russian does not become of age until he is 20.

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