BILL GERRITY'S WIFE.

She Strikes the Iron and He Blows the Bellows.

The Woman Blacksmith of Roxbury, Mass.—How She Assists Her Aged Husband—An Irish Girl's Devotion and Muscle.

Who is there in Roxbury, asks the Boston Globe, who hasn't heard of old "Bill" Gerrity, the blacksmith, who for forty years has worked the bellows and pounded the anvil in his little shop on Tremont street, near the Mission church?

If you haven't heard of "Bill" you surely have heard of his wife, who stands at the anvil all day and, with sturdy strokes, swings the hammer and fashions the iron, supple under the heat, while her husband assists her.

"Bill," as he is familiarly called, is one of those old settlers whose face and form have become, as it were, one of the old landmarks of old Roxbury, so rich in its coterie of oldest inhabitants, while his little shop stands to-day, as it did forty years ago, undismayed by the presence all around it of modern buildings, which make its crude outlines stand out more forcibly and shows its age by comparison.

If you ask "Bill" how old he is he will tell you he is sixty years, but if you ask one of the old settlers he will tell you that according to his "reckonin'" Bill must be "nigh on to ninety years."

If "Bill" was a picturesque character, insomuch that his occupation as village blacksmith rendered it proper to so characterize a man in time gone by, he was rendered more so when two years ago he startled his friends by taking to the altar a buxom lass of thirty-five summers.

It was only about a year previous that death had taken from him his first wife, who had lived to the rare old age of ninety-eight years.

"Bill's" new spouse was a stout girl named Hannah McIvers. She is about six feet tall, with a physique that many a strong man would envy. She was born in County Leitrim, Ireland.

When "Bill's" first wife died there were many stories floating around among the regulation gossips concerning the wealth that she had left behind her in her little apartments over the blacksmith shop. According to the stories she was one of those people who are said to deny themselves the pleasures of life and hoard up in mysterious hiding-places bags of yellow gold, and in the still hours of night find consolation in fondling the shiny pieces.

Some believed these stories, for it was well known that the old blacksmith worked early and late at his forge and always had lots of work to do. He was known to be of a saving disposition, and it was said that his wife, having passed the allotted threescore and ten line, determined that, when her somewhat younger husband should find himself alone and bent down with the results of hard work, he would not want for plenty to eat or a place to lay his head if money could procure them.

According to the stories that have become a chapter in the "Old Settlers' Biographical History of Events from Personal Knowledge," when she died there was great excitement on the "Hill." She had left relatives of various generations, and it is said that, several thousand dollars having been discovered, a good many people shared it besides the old blacksmith. Since then, owing to the effects of competition, "Bill" has not done the rushing business he did formerly, and then, too, he is not able to work as hard as before.

His present wife learned of this change of affairs and without standing on ceremony she went to him and volunteered to work at the forge and save the expense of his hiring a helper. "Bill" only laughed at her, for, besides being a little doubtful of her ability in that line, he had too much chivalry to permit it. But she persisted in her entreaties to be permitted to take her place at his side, and at last he reluctantly consented.

The blacksmith shop is a little story-and-a-half structure opposite the big ledge, known as McCarthy's ledge, on the hill near the Mission church on Tremont street. Until recently the ledge has been worked by a large force of men, and Bill depended on them mostly for his "jobs." He had almost the exclusive charge of sharpening the drills used by the "ledgers," and the work was of a heavy character. Since the introduction of steam drills "Bill" has not had so much to do as before, but he sharpens the new drills, though it requires much more skill and labor than sharpening ordinary tools.

The first day that his new wife stood at the anvil and swung the hammer "Bill" was convinced that she could do what she claimed. From that day out she has stood by his side, never demurring, but working cheerfully and well. "Bill" blows the bellows and handles the iron, and after it is properly heated he holds it on the anvil while his wife hammers it into shape under his direction.

People used to flock around every day and watch them work, but the novelty soon wore off, and the woman blacksmith became a fixture in Roxbury, attracting no unusual attention.

CHARLIE'S MUSTACHE.

It Was Very Small, But Its Owner Was Very Proud of It.

A young man and his girl were at the People's Theater the other night, says Texas Siftings. The young man carried his head on one side, it being forced into that position by the weight of a very tender mustache, which was composed of seven hairs upon one side and eleven upon the other side of his nose. The comedian on the stage had brought a laugh by some allusion to a boy's first shaving encounter with a barber, when the young man leaned over to his girl and whispered:

"That's true to life, I can tell you."

"How do you know?" inquired the girl.

"How do I know?" he repeated, in a whisper; "why, by experience, of course; that was the way with me when I first got shaved."

"When was that?" she asked, innocently.

"Oh, before I raised my mustache," he returned, moving uneasily.

"What mustache?" she queried, a little surprised.

"What mustache do you suppose?" he retorted, turning red.

"Why, Charlie," whispered the girl, "I never saw any mustache. Do you mean—"

"Never mind what I mean," hissed the young man through his front teeth, and became silent. There was lots of fun in the play, but Charlie never laughed again. He took the young woman home, but on the following Sunday night he went to see another girl.

Large and Respectable.

There is a large coinage of good stories about Hon. Hannibal Hamlin up in Maine, and this is one of them: In his earlier days, at a certain caucus in Hampden, the only attendants were himself and a citizen of very large stature. Mr. Hamlin had some resolutions to pass which began by representing that they were presented to a "large and respectable" gathering of voters. "Hold on," cried the other man; "we can't pass that, for it ain't true! It ain't a large and respectable caucus! There's only two of us." "You keep still, brother!" commanded the wily Hannibal; "it's all right, for you are large and I am respectable."

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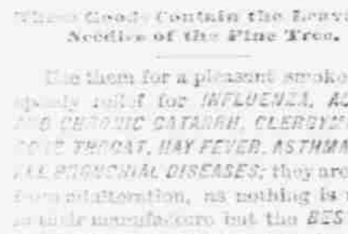

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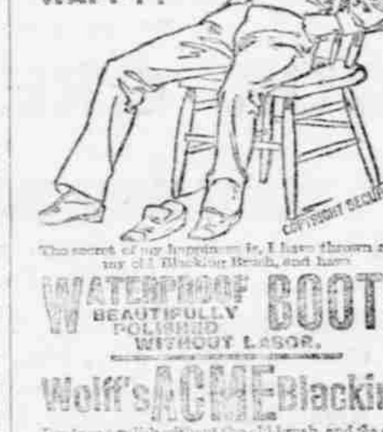

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HE KEPT HIS VOW.

A Millionaire's Son Running an Engine on a Texas Railway.

There is a man running an engine on the San Antonio division of the Southern Pacific Railway Company, between this city and Del Rio, whose name is familiar to many people in Indiana, writes a San Antonio correspondent of the Cincinnati Enquirer. He is no other than Frank Bracaw, the son of one of the richest men in Terre Haute, Ind., whose wealth is reckoned in the millions. He is one of the coolest, most unassuming and most reliable engineers in the service, and has hosts of friends in this city, none of whom, however, knew his history until to-day, when a most affecting accident brought it to light.

The people of Terre Haute will remember Frank as a dashing society man of that city ten years ago. He drove fast horses, and his way was paid by his father without question, and he had a monthly cash allowance of $150. Some trouble arose between father and son, the nature of which is unknown, and the son left home vowing never to darken the threshold of the parental home.

Seven years sped swiftly by, and Frank's sister lay upon her deathbed. Detectives were put upon the track of her brother. All the detective agencies in the country were furnished his description and directed to leave no stone unturned in the effort to find him, but to no avail. He had been completely swallowed up in the great world, and his sister died without seeing him.

Three more years passed away. A favorite cousin, the wife of an army officer, came to Del Rio with her husband, who is now in command of the post at that place. To-day they were dining, as usual, at the Valverde Hotel. A nice-looking young man sat at a table near them and observed the lady attentively. Having finished eating he passed out through the office and asked the clerk if the lady wasn't Mrs. Wheeler. Being answered in the affirmative, he added: "She is my own cousin," and went on. The lady now came out, and the clerk asked:

"Do you see that handsome young man just going out?"

"Yes."

"He says he is your cousin."

She turned quickly observed him more closely, a flood of recognition came over her, and she called sharply: "Frank." The man went on as though he didn't hear, but she ran after him and caught him. A pathetic scene followed, in which both actors were moved to tears. The lady besought him to return to his parents, who are now old and feeble, but he remained obdurate and firm in his intentions never to return.

A LEGEND OF MAINE.

Singular Circumstance Connected With The Building of a Church.

Residents in a certain seaport town of Lincoln County remember a singular circumstance connected with the erection of its oldest church, says the Lewiston, (Me.) Journal. There is a deal of superstition as native to these ledges as the ill-smelling rockweed.

The towns-people were very poor when the old church was built. The actual amount of money given toward it was very small indeed. Hardly a person in town but contributed some material, however. In the northern part, close by a cove whose banks were mantled with beautiful moss, after the first few feet of cliff, and crowned with sturdy trees and straight, stalwart pines, lived a man noted for other things than generosity. The soliciting committee put off asking for his contribution until others had poured in and the church was a sure thing. Then they waited upon him and said: "Mr. Blank, we want that monster pine of yours for your contribution to the church, it will make an excellent sill; will you give it for your part?"

"Give my best pine tree, give any of my pine? No, sir. Not one of them shall come down."

Nothing could shake this determination. In less than a week arose one of the heaviest storms ever known on that coast. And not one of those proudest pines in the man's forest was left; and the tallest pine, the one wanted for a sill, was riven from top to bottom by the thunder-bolt.

THE VETERAN'S STORY.

His Escape from the Prison Pen at Salisbury, N. C.

I was one of the crowd of Union prisoners which dug the long tunnel and escaped from the prison pen at Salisbury, N. C., said a veteran to a New York Sun writer. Those of us who had worked the hardest had the first show on the night when we broke through into the railroad cut. As fast as we got out we took different directions, as had been planned. I went up the Yadlin river, hoping to get into Virginia. I had a $20 gold piece—one which I had carried in my boot heel for three months unknown to any one. It was given me by a citizen of Salisbury in exchange for $5,000 worth of Confederate gold bonds.

I made fair progress to the North that night and the next day. As evening came again I was forced to stop at a farm-house and ask for something to eat. My request was readily granted, and when I rose to go the man of the house observed:

"Stranger, they say a lot of Yanks got clean out of the pen at Salisbury the other night."

"Is that so?"

"And they've scattered over the kentry like so many rabbits."

"Yes?"

"And they say that whoever brings one back gets a hundred dollars."

"Well?"

"Well, I reckon I'll hitch up to the cart and drive you back."

"What! Do you take me for an escaped Yankee prisoner?" I exclaimed.

"Sartin we do," replied the farmer and his wife in chorus.

"You are greatly mistaken. Would a Yankee prisoner have this about him?"

I laid the gold on the table. Perhaps it was the first twenty either had ever seen. It seemed a fortune to a poor family.

"I'm going to leave it with you," I continued. "You can give me some meat and meal and a bed-quilt for it."

They were perfectly satisfied of my identity and where I had come from, but the man held the gold in his hand and said:

"Mother, he'un can't be no Yank."

"In co'se he ain't," she replied. "He'un must be a Confederit contractor lookin' after hogs an' co'n."

"I reckon."

"An' it's our dooty to help he'un get through."

"Of co'se."

"Then you put up the stuff fur him, while I tell him the best route, an' in case any sojers call here an' ask if we'uns has seen any of them Yankee prisoners, we'uns is to say to they'uns that we'uns haven't seen a hair or heard a hoot."

I was captured near Rochford and returned to the pen, but it was no fault of the people who gave me such a lift on my way.

A Gallant Frenchman.

The mayor of a French town had, in accordance with the recent regulations, to make out a passport for a rich and highly respectable lady of his acquaintance, who, in spite of a slight disfigurement, was quite vain of her personal appearance. His native politeness prompted him to gloss over the defect and, after a moment's reflection, he wrote among the items of personal description: Eyes dark, beautiful, tender, expressive, but one of them missing.

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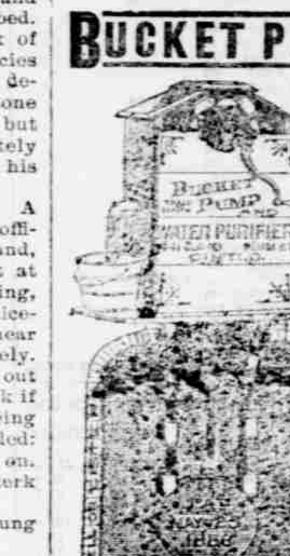

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Apr. 25, '90-1y

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A BEGGAR'S HISTORY.

The Queer Tale Told by a Female Organ-Grinder.

She Claims to Be a Descendant of a Noble Russian Family—Her Descent in the Social Scale Due to a Romantic Attachment.

The old woman who plays the hand-organ at the corner of Ninth and Vine streets has a history, according to the Philadelphia correspondent of the Chicago Times. "I was born," she said, "on the 4th day of August, 1817, in Werinland, Sweden, and am now, you see, seventy-three years of age. My name is Anna Svenson. That is not my full name, but is enough and will do. Our family name was well known in Sweden, and also in Russia; in fact, our family is Russian.

"In the time of Catherine our family estates were of the largest held by the nobility. My mother was a direct descendant of the Vasa dynasty. I never knew her, as she died when I was born. You see that on my mother's side I am of royal lineage, and on my father's side I descended from the proudest of Russian aristocracy. My father was a proud man, morose and stern in the extreme. The soldiers in their summer camp at Visby, whom he commanded, would often be flogged by his orders for some trifling offense.

"I remember little of Werinland, for as a child my time was passed in the school at Stockholm, and as a young lady I was at court more than anywhere else. When I was twenty years old we were at our Stockholm home, and daily in attendance at the palace, or at Drottningholm. I was the especial favorite of Princess Eugenie. I was constantly her companion. She loved me and spoke to me as I think my mother would have done. There was at court at that time a nobleman named Baron Phegren, of high rank, but as poor as a beggar. He had a son Carl, a Captain in the navy, whom I had met at court balls and receptions. Carl and I during that summer met very often. We walked and talked and rowed together until I found that I loved him.

"Princess Eugenie said to me one day: 'Ah, my dear, this love of Carl's will give you trouble some day.' I smiled at her, but thought nothing of it. But one day at Drottningholm Carl told me that he would at once speak to my father. I hated that, but I said: 'Yes, do so,' and he went away happy. Poor Carl! I don't know what passed between him and my father, but on the next evening my father sent for me to come in the library. I went there; he was tall, cold, stern; a man of iron. 'So, so, my little Countess,' he laughed, 'you love Carl, do you? Well, well, I'll soon stop that,' and then he began to tell me how poor Carl was, that he wanted simply my money, that he was a drinking man, a bad man. Oh! how that night comes back to me.

"I never said a word in answer; simply stood there trembling from head to foot. At length my father stopped and putting his hand heavily on my shoulder he said: 'Go to your room; you shall never marry Carl Phegren, never.' Carl met me the next day in the garden. He was haggard and pale. 'You know all,' he said, and then, without waiting for an answer, he urged me to leave Sweden—to go with him to America to build a little home there in the land of the free. I would not. I could not. I respected my father. I did not want him to curse me. Then Carl left me and I never saw him again. A few days afterward they found him on the beach at Waxholm dead, with a bullet in his heart. They never knew whether he killed himself or was murdered.

"I lived on. I was alone, that was all. One day father told me I was to marry. He had a husband for me. I refused to obey him; then, in his passion, he struck me, and as I lay on the ground he told me he would kill me as he did Carl. He stopped as he said that and then quietly, with a white, drawn face, he left me alone.

"My father was a murderer!

"I left the house that night and Sweden shortly afterward; first I went to London and then I came to this country. I saw notices about my strange disappearance in the papers, but I wanted only to die. I went through your rebellion as a nurse in the South. Then I wandered from one place to another, and I descended still lower and lower in the social scale, until now I am what you see me.

"Little do the people who give me a cent for my poor organ music think that once I was a belle of the old world's nobility; that I danced with Kings, and that the blood of a Vasa is running in my veins."

HE LOST THE TRAIL.

A Yankee's Adventure in the New, Very New, South.

The prevalent practice of building cities on paper, where more substantial material is wanting, seems to have reached its height in a certain locality in the South, which was recently visited by a Maine man, who relates, in the Lewiston (Me.) Journal, an amusing incident of his trip.

The "city" is at a famous railway junction, and high expectations are entertained of its future greatness, especially by the original "city company." On its map may be seen magnificent avenues intersected by broad streets, with here and there spacious parks, beautiful fountains, etc.

It happened during his stay that the man from Maine had occasion to go in search of a person on a dark night. Being unfamiliar with the "city," he was accompanied by one of its original fathers. With a lantern to throw light on their path they started. After walking a short distance the guide, with a view of communicating instruction as well as agreeable information, stopped in the neighborhood of a group of towering pines. Swinging the lantern slowly around, he said:

"Here we are, stranger, right on Magnolia avenue—a fine street, one hundred feet wide."

Proceeding a little way further, he remarked:

"This is Broad street—an excellent thoroughfare for business purposes. Just beyond is Highland avenue, on which are fine sites for private residences."

The stranger began looking for these sites, but owing to the darkness was unable to distinguish them. After stumbling on, up and down ravines, over stumps and other obstacles peculiar to more than one Southern metropolis, the guide again stopped and remarked, with some hesitation:

"This, sir, is—ah!—let me see—I—I believe, sir—that is to say—cuss it! I've lost the trail!"

Thackeray's Unpublished Poem.

A New Yorker who was lately in London saw there a remarkable poem by Thackeray that has never been printed and is now in the possession of the eminent surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson. Thackeray, who was ill when he wrote it, was a patient of this surgeon, and the poem is a series of daily sketches of the progress of his case, all of them written in the most satirical vein, and many of them while he was in acute pain. The New Yorker who saw Thackeray's manuscript, and has been telling his friends about it, says that the famous satirist "surpassed himself" in this production, but its possessor will not permit its publication for reasons satisfactory to himself.

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MOUNTAIN CLIMBING.

Women Who Have Recently Won Considerable Distinction.

Feats Accomplished by a German Traveler and His Wife—Mrs. [illegible] Adventures in Asia—[illegible] Explored by Miss Dowie.

Several women have won considerable distinction within the past few months in the way of mountain climbing, says the New York Sun. Mount Clarence, the great summit on the mountain Fernando Po, near the west coast of Africa, was recently ascended by a German traveler and his wife, who passed unscathed among the Bube tribes that have been such a terror to all explorers. These people have been regarded as mysterious people simply because they were not known. Several men have tried in vain to penetrate the central portion of the island and ascend Mount Clarence, but a European woman was in the first party that got to the top.

Another remarkable journey, of which news has just come, is that of Mrs. Littledale and her husband, who have crossed the great Central Asiatic range of the Hindu Kush. Here are the loftiest peaks of the globe, though this chain of mountains, which a woman has now helped to conquer, has attracted less attention than the Himalayan range lying to the East, on account of its inaccessibility and the supposed hostility of the tribes. The only explorers who have been in this region are native Indian surveyors, sent out by the Indian Government in the guise of peddlers and merchants, and we have depended upon their reports for our information about this country.

It is not yet known how Mr. and Mrs. Littledale succeeded in getting over these mountains, but a telegram from Calcutta announces that their journey has been safely completed. They crossed the mountains at a point a little northwest of Cashmere. This is undoubtedly the first time in Central Asia that a white woman was with the party which did the pioneer exploring in a region that was supposed to be inaccessible to white men.

The most remarkable woman climber of the past year is Miss Mene Dowie, an adventuresome Scotch girl, who spent last summer traveling alone among the Carpathian mountains, in the northeast part of Austro-Hungary, on horseback and on foot, with no companion except the peasant who attended her. For ten weeks in this wild region she lived among the Galician peasantry, conforming entirely to their ways of life. Night after night, when up in the high mountains, she slept in the open air, wrapped only in a cloak. She had reason to know now and then in her solitude that wildcats, bears and wolves exist in considerable number in the Carpathians, and are rather more curious to find out all about a stranger than was comfortable for her. But she says there is no real obstacle to a girl traveling alone from London to the Russian frontier.

Probably not one girl in ten thousand, however, would think there was any fun in traveling as Miss Dowie did. She seldom wore shoes when climbing the mountains, for they were slippery, and she found she could ascend a steep slope in greater comfort barefoot, with her footgear slung around her neck. She met with a number of accidents, and was very near drowned once while bathing. But she returned home very brown and healthy and very enthusiastic over her unique summer tour. She says she is going back to Galicia again, but she hopes that her description of the journey will not induce any other girl to follow her example, for the hardships of the journey, she thinks, would in most cases more than offset its pleasant and romantic features. She says no one can travel among this mountain peasantry without believing that Poland will one day be on her feet again. The people cling to their love of the old nationality and have unshaken faith that Poland will one day again wear its crown.

The young lady read a paper on her summer's adventures before the British Association. The paper showed how admirably a young lady may study geography, for it was full of interesting information, and the great geographer, Ravenstein, said, in moving a vote of thanks, that Miss Dowie was more entitled to be called a real geographer than many of those who went much further afield.

In our own White mountains not a few ladies perform feats of mountaineering which a good many of their brethren do not care to undertake. Some people who have gone up Tuckerman's ravine and found their feet weighing fifty pounds apiece at the top, have wondered that any woman should attempt this hardest of Mount Washington climbs; but for weeks at a time in the season hardly a day elapses that one or more ladies do not make this ascent, clambering in the last one thousand feet over bare rocks where the route is indicated only by daubs of white paint. A few ladies also have made the journey over the northern peaks to the top of Mount Washington, while any number of them have traveled along the bridle path leading from the Tiptop House to Crawford's. Every season sees quite a number of women in the White mountains who pride themselves upon their capabilities as mountaineers, and there is nothing in the New Hampshire peaks that they will not attempt.

Justice and Ex-Clown.

Dan Rice, the old-time clown, is passing his summer in New York, and looks as young and fresh as a boy from school. He lectures some nowadays, and knows how to give an interesting talk, says the New York World. Occasionally he meets a venerable person who laughed at his jokes and grimaces nearly fifty years ago, and who recalls his grand old educated horse Excelsior, over which Dan himself has shed many a tear. One day a United States justice shook hands with him on the rear of a Broadway car. "Uncle Dan," said the justice, "you don't know me, and this is the first time in my life that I have ever spoken to you, but when I was a boy I crawled under your tent to see you, got caught by a canvasman, and had powdered resin sprinkled all over my hair." The justice and the ex-clown had a great laugh over the incident.

Mechanical Curiosities.

Darius L. Goff, of Pawtucket, R. I., who has a fancy for mechanical curiosities, possesses a clock that never runs down. Through an ingenious contrivance it is kept wound by the simple opening and closing of the front door of the house. Electrical appliances, operated by the running of the clock, raise the gas jet in the hall at dusk and lower it at bedtime; ring an early rising bell for the servants, a later one for the family, and an hour later the breakfast bell, and when the hour is struck musical cathedral chimes respond in the chambers of the house.

The Busiest Are the Happiest.

The secret of success in life is to keep busy, to be persevering, patient and untiring in the pursuit or calling you are following. The busy ones now and then make mistakes, but it is better to risk these than to be idle and inactive. Keep doing, whether it be at work or seeking recreation. Motion is life, and the busiest are the happiest. Cheerful, active labor is a blessing. An old philosopher says: "The fire-fly only shines when on the wing; so is it with the mind; when once we rest we darken."