

BLACK BELT BELIEFS.

ODD SOUTHERN SUPERSTITIONS.

Visit to a Colored School. Characteristic Speech by an Ex-Slave That Ended With a Prayer.



HE sunlight is to the earth, after a period of darkness, what superstition is to the Southern negro. In it he seems to "live, move and have his being." Even Ben, my faithful guide and storehouse of knowledge, is steeped in it.

For some days he has not appeared to be himself, and upon inquiry I learn that "de ole red mule done lose her shoe in de cotton patch," and that is a sign that Ben will not be successful in selling the cotton products in the fall.

"Fie, fie, Ben, do not be so superstitious; that can't hurt you any. The idea of believing such a sign!"

"Well, chile, yo' shud doan know nothin' about it. Is yo' superstitious?"

"No, Ben," I replied, and blushed at the fib. Would it do him any good to know that I had one or two pet signs which I cherished and believed in implicitly? He would not understand that to me superstition was "the poetry of life."

"Doan yo' know I'm a Joseph, honey?" continued Ben; "an' would yo' know some of my signs? Yo' better write 'em down in yo' little book," and I obeyed him.

"When yo' pick up a horseshoe an' it has nails in it yo' will sure have sickness in yo' family; if de nails am gone it means luck, but yo' mus' hang it up."

"When yo' house is full of mice or rats yo' must write a letter to de mice and tell them wa' ter go. If dey doan go at once write another letter and dey sure will go."

"But Ben, the reason they go is because you are closing the holes, and they must starve or go somewhere else."

"Chile, jes' keep quiet. I sure know mo' about it than yo'. When the house is hanted, an' de hant' dress is white, yo' mus' cut a lock of hair from de first nigger yo' meet an' put it over de front door. Ef yo' chile be afraid

of hants, sit it over hot lard and say: 'De Lawd He put de debbil in de swine an' I done send de debbil in de lard, fo' swine and lard mus' evil spirits keep, but de Lawd He save de chile.'

"But, Ben—"

"When yo' dream of a coffin yo' will heal yo' friend is married to yo' lover, but if yo' see de corpse yo' will marry him yo' self. When yo' scour a flo' always turn yo' bucket to the right; it save you many shiver. When de debbil come in the sick room, burn de bed and yo'll have a live man ter keep."

"Ben, don't you—"

"When de white lady ask too many questions and 'rapt pore Ben he won't say any mo' and with this quaint bit o' wisdom he ended his seeming soliloquy."

How sorry I was that I had interrupted him. I coaxed him to continue, but he was not to be coaxed. That evening we were all sitting on the veranda when Ben said:

"Who is de daughters of the Revolution yo' talk so much about?" and we each gave our views of the question and explained it simply, so that he would understand.

"An' must yo' prove that yo' ancestors fought? I sure believe my old woman is one of de daughters. Her gran'father, Massa S—, wa' a General in de wah. He sure fought in de Revolution; he sure wa' killed at de 'Bunker Hill'."

"Are yo' very sure about it, Ben; very sure? How did she come to be so far South?"

"Someone carried her mother, heah. Yo' com' ter de cabin an' ask de ole woman yo' self; she knows."

Again Ben had innocently raised a perplexing question. His wife, the quadroon and ex-slave, could boast of aristocratic blood. This woman, this negress, was the grandchild of a man whom the colonists loved and admired—a daughter of the Revolution! No! No! Her black blood, the negro blood, forbids that, and yet what irony of fate brands this woman a negress and counts her three-fourths of white blood as nothing! Is it not strange? What inequalities of life in a land where all men are declared free and equal. What black and clouded skies for some, what brilliancy and sunshine for others! Martyrdom and freedom go hand in hand. Time must solve this problem.

A VISIT TO BLACK BELT SCHOOL.

Ben has taken us all to the village school. What humble boys and girls we see. As we go into the room the

pupils lay down their well-thumbed spelling books and look at us in amazement. The "professor" tells us to be seated and continues the lesson.

"Sydney C— give a sentence containing a conjunctive adverb."

Sydney rises, and with quivering lips replies: "O, the sun is running around the globe and I'm so cold."

"Give another," says Ben. (The professor has told us to request his pupils).

"The heavens declare the glory of God and Birmingham is a great city," replies Sydney, now thoroughly frightened.

I look around the bare room and copy the questions and answers that are upon the blackboard.

Bones or articulation are those joint at which two (3) bones play on each other, come in contact, muscle are commonly cold flesh or meat moses or red mas.

Blood is a read liquid called vertebrate.

Digestion goes through a canal call asparagus into a pouch call stomach. Name two kinds of blood.

Thick and thin, warm and cold, red and yellow.

How is the air received into the body?

The air is received first by the throat, enters the body to a spongy bulk in our boddies call lites.

The organ of circulation is the nose. Circulation is caused by the circulation of the ear.

While I am musing upon the possibilities and the future of these urchins before me I hear the teacher say: "We will now hear some remarks from our visitors."

How the changes ring in the gamut of fear. Even while I think I am called upon to speak. Don't ask me what I said, something about Cinderella and being good children. They must pardon my abruptness. I never made a speech, in fact wasn't prepared. Then I get to talking about Joseph and am suddenly disconcerted when a pick-aninny says: I know dat; Joseph was a pretty man an his brethren sheep heads."

"So am I" is my inward thought, and I sit down. The others of the party make brief addresses and then Ben comes forward. I take a pencil from my pocket and slyly copy his remarks.

OLD BEN MAKES A SPEECH.

Chillen, yo' sure should be proud to live and go ter school. When I wa' a boy like yo', I used ter get a lash in

stead of the spellin' book. Yo' should be glad to be in America, and niggers tho' yo' be, yo' is as surely American as anyone else in it. See what a fine city we live in; we has a bank in this city, we is. We are a great people. Yo' must be good boys and girls, with hearts large enough to grasp de whole worl'; yo' must hab sympathy fo' de fall'n an' de lowly. Fo' get yo' self and live fo' others an' in others.

Yo' nebbes saw yo' poor ole mammy tied and lashed. Yo' nebbes heard de houn's bay at night while yo' knelt at her knee an' tried to say "Our Father." Yo' nebbes heard de cry of de unfortunate creature. Yo' hab nebbes bin sold to de highest bidder. Pore Ben remembers well de fast tim' he wa' sold. He were free in soul tho' called brute; free in thought tho' called ignorant. I've heard yo' spell, an' it fill my soul with joy. It make pore Ben glad ter know his boys and girls can read and write.

And then, leaning forward, he prayed for them and theirs. What a simple prayer it was—the very a, b, c's! And yet who knows but in His sight it was more acceptable than others that are more magnificent? Ben's prayer was from the heart—Miss Jo NAKO, in Pittsburg (Pa.) Dispatch.

An Automatic Contribution Collector.

A fashionable Philadelphia church has just had put in an automatic contribution collector. The idea of this ingenious mechanism is derived from the cash railway of the dry goods shop, but it possesses certain original attachments all its own. The idea is to send a number of beautifully decorated little baskets of brass wire through the congregation at collection time; each basket, of course, following a different course, and moving with solemnity and sedateness. A famous Spanish scientist has invented a musical signal box, which is fastened to each basket and which is a miracle of ingenuity. If a cent is deposited it will ghent a loud, dissatisfied grunt and will emit the same sound when buttons or other spurious contributions are passed off on it. A series of musical sounds will be given forth for quarters, halves, dollars and bills, sweet in proportion to their value, and when a check is deposited—checks generally being for larger sums than \$20—a long whistle, as of gratified surprise, will proclaim the event throughout the church.

Tax annual report issued by State Comptroller Heppner shows that during the past year there were 1900 accidents on all the railroads in New Jersey. The number of persons killed in the accidents was 331; 304 were killed or injured by jumping from trains in motion. The elevation of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks in Jersey City has greatly lessened the number of fatalities.

SOLDIERS' COLUMN

PITTSBURG LANDING ENGAGEMENT.

A Thrilling Description of Two Dreadful Days on the Battlefield.



The hospital steamer on which myself and two other ladies took passage to Pittsburg Landing from Cairo, Ill., reached Savannah, eight miles below it, about 4 o'clock. There we heard the news of the terrible battle that had been fought the day before.

We were soon out of our berth and on the outlook. The boat, with a full head of steam, made all possible speed to reach Pittsburg Landing. Two gunboats lay out in the stream, sending shot and shell over the heads of the Union Army in the Confederate ranks. As the boat steamed up to the Landing, where already a great fleet of steamers was lying, the shells went screaming over our heads with deafening fury. All was in seeming confusion at the Landing. The roadways, dug out of the steep bank, were insufficient for such an emergency. In the hard fight on the day before a vast amount of ammunition had been used, and the officers all well knew that with the dawn of the coming day the battle would be renewed with desperate fury. Every teamster was, therefore, doing his utmost to get ammunition and provisions to the front. They would bring their mules to the steep, roadless bank, that stood at an angle of forty-five degrees, and while the driver held the lines with a strong, steady hand, and set his foot heels so as to keep a standing position as he ploughed his way to the bottom, his mules put their little front feet down, settled themselves on their haunches, on which the wagon rested, and sketched to the bottom with the driver. It was a wild sight. Each teamster had an assistant who held a torch made of pine. Hundreds of torches lighted up the black night. There was a clamor that cannot be described in the loading up and a steady stream of loaded wagons going up the hill by the regular roadways.

As soon as the first rays of the morning light made objects distinct, the firing began.

Both armies had rested, face to face, on their arms, and a hasty breakfast had been snatched of what they could get before daylight, for all well knew that a bloody day was before them.

Our hospital boat was lying alongside of other steamers.

We could hear the heavy guns, the screaming of the shells, the thunders of the battle going on near by. As the light increased we shivered to see the wounded lying on bags of grain and out on the guards, and the dead who had been carried from the boats, lying, mangled and bloody, along the shore of the river. At first we could only cover our faces with our hands in a shiver and chill of agony, in the attempt to hide the horrid sights of war from our eyes.

But as we stood there a feeble hand was lifted, and a feeble voice called out:

"Say, lady! Can't you bring me a drink of water?"

Immediately a hundred hands were lifted. We could scarcely see them in the faint light of the early morning, but we could hear the voices.

"Bring me some water."

"Bring me something to eat."

I called out cheerily:

"Yes, yes, we'll help you all we can."

It was a great relief to have something to do. We went with gladness to our work. I was the pioneer and went right on to the boat lying nearest.

The surgeon in charge of our boat had gone off to the field. There was no one in authority left on the boat, and we took possession.

I had several boxes of canned oysters and three or four barrels of crackers, but we soon exhausted these; then we began on the beef in the storeroom.

Barrels of soup were made and distributed. The other two ladies made the soup and I distributed it from boat to boat and from one to another. Oh, the sights and scenes I witnessed that day!

As I was carrying a bucket of soup across a gang-plank, an officer met me. He came bounding forward, with his sword clanking by his side.

"Madam!" he said; "what are you doing?"

I was startled nearly out of my wits, but I managed to say:

"I am carrying soup to the wounded."

"Why, you ought not to do that. See here, soldier, you carry soup for this woman."

The soldier sprang forward and took the bucket of soup from my hand, and the officer went on. I never knew who he was. If this falls under his eyes I want to thank him for his thoughtfulness. And on, all day, I went with my assistant, while the two lady helpers worked as fast as they possibly could to get the food ready.

The distribution of the food was very rapid.

Men with broken legs and arms and gashed faces would hold out their tin cups or canteens to be filled. The tin cups were easily filled, but the canteens took longer. When they saw us coming, they would pound on the floor or on the side of the boat, calling piteously:

"Don't pass me by! I am here, lady, please give me some soup."

"Please, lady, pour some water on my arm, it is so dry and hot and the wound hurts so."

Without a moment's relation the day passed in this kind of work. In the afternoon the gunboats stopped firing, and the news came that the Confederates were driven back.

Oh! how much that meant to us all, for through all that morning the boats had their full head of steam on, so that if the army was driven to the river as many as possible could escape by that means.

Now and then I would see a surgeon dressing some of the worst wounds. In every case they would pause long enough to say:

"Thank you, lady, that is just what they want, I see you carry water, too. Drench the wounds with that." I soon found myself drenching the wounds. My clothing was wet and muddy to my knees, but I did not see it. I had not eaten a mouthful of food since the night before, but I did not know it. I was entirely unconscious of weariness and human needs.

It was about 10 o'clock at night when some one asked:

"Did you have supper?" This little question called me to the consciousness of my condition.

"No," I answered. "I have not had a mouthful to eat since yesterday evening."

A surgeon operating near by looked at me earnestly, and then said with a voice of authority:

"Madam, stop work immediately. We will have you on our hands next."

I was cutting a fragment of a blue blouse away from the arm of a wounded young soldier. I continued my work till the bits of the blouse were gotten out as far as I could see, then laid on a wet compress.

"Oh! thank you," he said, with grateful tears in his eyes.

I went back to the cabin of the hospital boat and had my supper. After changing my clothing I sat down on a divan, feeling almost too weak and exhausted to stir. A chaplain came on the boat inquiring for me. When he met me he seized my hand and began to bellow. When I saw him I knew that he was crazy. The officers of the boat ran back to see what was the matter, and somehow the surgeon in charge managed to get him into a state-room and lock him in and place guards at the door, and the next day he was sent up with other patients to St. Louis on that boat.

Early the next morning I was transferred with the little baggage I had to another boat set aside for hospital workers. My fine dress which I had worn for the first time was wet and muddy and I pitched it into the river. Dr. Turner was placed in charge of the boat, and Dr. Grinstead was his attendant.

The Confederates had retreated toward Corinth, Miss., but there was still firing to be heard in the distance.

Early in the day I went up the steep bank and out on the battle-field.

The wounded had been gathered up as far as I could see, but many of the dead were lying where they fell.

Not far from the landing there were some tents. In one of these tents a son of Sam Houston, of Texas, lay on the ground with others, the gray and the blue lying together. Young Houston was severely wounded in the thigh. I saw him many times afterwards, the last time a prisoner at Camp Douglas near Chicago.

I went toward a house on the right but before I reached it I saw men coming, carrying a wounded man.

They had made a seat by clasping their hands, and his arms were thrown about their necks. I went forward to meet them.

"Oh, set me down by that tree. I can go no further," he cried.

They carried him as tenderly as they could, and placed him between the great roots of a very large tree. His breast was bare and the blood was slowly oozing out of a wound in his lungs.

"I am dying," he said. "Can't somebody pray?" Both men were weeping. If he was not a brother he was a friend. I answered promptly:

"I can pray." I knelt there on the damp ground, and taking one of his hands in my own, I asked in simple words the Heavenly Father to forgive and bless. He responded to each petition. I kept on praying till he said, "The way is light now. I do not fear."

There was a little gasp, a shiver, and all was still. As I knelt there I closed my eyes and said:

"He is dead."

"Yes," they answered with a sob.

"He is dead and this is all we can do. We will report the case and have his grave marked." And we turned away and left him there.

An hour afterwards I returned that way. It was a most impressive sight to see a dead man sitting there so calmly and peacefully, with eyes closed. When I passed that way again they had taken him away.

The country can never pay those who went out and heroically defended the flag. Such scenes as these bring gray hairs before their time to those who look on. What must it have been to those in the midst of the fight—ANNIE WITTENMYER, in "Home and Country."

An Odd Custom.

In Hungary and Brittany the young girls assemble on certain fete days, wearing red petticoats with white or yellow borders around them. The number of borders denotes the portion the father is willing to give his daughter. Each white band, representing silver, denotes 100 francs per annum, and each yellow band denotes gold, betokening 1,000 francs a year.

People intend to do their best, but somehow they do nothing during the day they can think of without regret, when they are alone at night.

PENNSYLVANIA PICKINGS.

SOME IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS

Of Interest to Dwellers in the Keystone State.

NEW PIPE LINE COMPANY.

The statement of the Meaville Producers and Refiners' Pipe Line Company, limited, capital \$250,000, has been filed in the office of the County Recorder. The managers of the company are J. W. Lee, Chairman; S. Y. Ramage, Secretary and Treasurer; G. H. Torry, John Swartz and A. D. Wood. Messrs Ramage and Swartz represent the refiners and the others the producers. The general office of the company will be located at Titusville, but there will be branch offices opened wherever necessary or convenient, the principal of which will be in Pittsburg.

TWO MEN INSTANTLY KILLED.

Lawrence Kavanaugh and Cyrus Hysler were the names of two men instantly killed on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Steelton. Kavanaugh had been near the track, conversing with a lady, and while standing on a private crossing was struck by a passenger train. Hysler attempted to cross the railroad a short distance from him and was caught by the locomotive. Both were from Steelton.

A CHERRY HORSE THIEF.

W. C. Irwin, of Canton township, Washington Co., drove into town Sunday and hitched his horse in the rear of the second Presbyterian church, where he attended worship. He had no sooner entered the building than a clever thief drove off in his buggy. His loss will be \$200. Officers are in pursuit.

ROBBERS RAID A VILLAGE.

LANCASTER.—An organized band in the northern part of this county raided the village of Maytown. The houses of six of the most prominent citizens were entered and considerable booty secured. The robbers were fired upon at the last place entered and bent a retreat. A posse of citizens is now in pursuit.

FATAL FALL FROM SWING.

Joseph King, an 11-year-old son of Hugh King, a blacksmith living at Dunbar, fell from a swing and broke his neck. He died in a few minutes. He only fell a few feet from the swing, but in falling he struck the back of his head in such a way that his neck was broken. His parents are heart-broken over their sad loss.

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE SPREADING.

Reports from various parts of Lawrence county, particularly that portion on the Beaver river, indicate that grasshoppers are playing and havoc with the crops. Never to the recollection of the oldest inhabitants have grasshoppers been so numerous as now.

HANGED HIMSELF TO A RAFTER.

The vicinity of Greenville was shocked by the news of Squire Goucher, a prominent citizen living on Mercer street, having hanged himself to a rafter in his barn. When cut down all signs of life had fled. At this hour no cause has been given for the rash act.

ROBBERS ENTERED FRED RAMEY'S COAL OFFICE in Altoona Monday night and blew open the safe. They secured very little.

SAMUEL BELL, of Mapleton, Pa., was instantly killed yesterday by the premature fall of rock in a stone quarry in which he was working.

STIVE BRODERER, a Hungarian miner, was killed by falling slate in the Leisenring No. 1 mine, near Greensburg, Monday. He leaves a wife and family.

UNIONTOWN.—The Washington Springs property, the well-known mountain summer resort, was Monday sold to Louis Reinhardt, of Pittsburg, for \$4,000.

At Beaver Falls, William Halt, an Eighth avenue merchant, was victimized by sharpshooters who played an old game on him. They bought five cents worth of tobacco and while he was out getting change for \$10 they tapped the till for \$50.

At New Castle, Lee Cunningham, one of the most prominent persons of Little Beaver, shot four times at Justice Harvey McKown in a dispute over a line fence.

At Norristown, Hannah Johnson has been held for court, charged with being a common scold. She recently, it is alleged, abused a neighbor until the latter was prostrated by nervousness.

JOHN DAILEY, a farmer of Hamorton, near Reading, was fatally wounded by a tramp whom he had employed.

The reward for the capture of Frank Cooley has been increased to \$1,300.

The 3-year-old son of Andrew Baseter, of Merwin, swallowed a button-hook, and died from the effects.

W. W. WALKER, a painter, was found dead along the Lake Shore track near Stoneboro. He was evidently killed during the night by a train. His wife is visiting in Clarion.

At Hollidaysburg fourteen stables, out-buildings and shops were laid in ruins by fire. The home fire department was unable to control the situation, and fire companies were summoned from Altoona and the Lutheran Church was thus saved. The loss is \$5,000; insurance, \$3,000.

FARMER COLLIER, whose trap gun killed Jack Cooley, near Uniontown, has served written notice upon Sheriff McCormick that he will hold Fayette county responsible for any damage the Cooley gang may inflict upon him.

HENRY YAMBER, of Erie, had been working steam thrasher, and when through went to the creek and took a bath. Soon after he was taken sick and expired in a short time. His death is supposed to have been caused by being overheated when he went into the water.

Traveling Bees.

The distances traversed by bees in pursuit of honey are surprising to a person unfamiliar with the habits of these busy workers. A book-keeper one morning dredged the backs of his bees with flour as they were leaving the hives. He did this by preconcerted arrangement with a friend who had a fine clover field in bloom forty miles away. The day following the experiment he received a letter from his friend, stating: "There are plenty of your white-jacket bees here in my clover." It was truly a wonderful instinct that sent the bees so far from home in quest of honey.

An insane Chinese at Hillsboro, Oregon, chopped off his right hand at the wrist. He sojourned there for some time with a hatbox before the number dropped off. The only explanation that he made was that the hand "wasn't," and he wanted to rid himself of the dissonant portion of his anatomy.

NEWSY GLEANINGS.

CHOLERA is raging in Burnham. The drought in Texas is broken. The cholera is still moving westward. The oat crop is reported a fair average.

TORRISTERS are numerous in the White Mountains.

The Agricultural Appropriation bill stops further foreign crop reports.

The Queen's speech to the British Parliament is the shortest on record.

BRASIL has doubled its purchases of American cotton within a year.

The drought in Australia has been effective in destroying many thousands of rabbits.

GREAT damage has been done to Spanish vineyards through the ravages of phylloxera.

The shipments of new crop India wheat to the English market are less than those of last year.

SEVEN widows of Revolutionary soldiers are on the rolls of the Knoxville (Tenn.) pension office.

AFTER gathering in their crops in Utah, 500 Mormon families will move to Mexico in the autumn.

The Chilean Senate will try the late Ministers of Balmaina on charges of treason and corruption.

THE salmon pack on Columbia River, in Oregon, for the season just closed amounts to 448,000 cases.

SOUTH DAKOTA is overrun with tramps. Farmers tried without success to hire them. They are now being driven out of the country.

During their concert tour through Germany the New York Arion Society sang to over 50,000 persons and added \$5000 to various poor funds.

COMPLAINTS are heard from Omaha that in many sections there are few or no grains of wheat in many heads which look plump and promising.

ASTRONOMERS throughout the United States expect great scientific results from the observation of the planet Mars, while in opposition to the earth.

UNITED STATES troops are driving "scoons" and cattlemen out of the Cherokee Strip. The latter are using all possible means to delay eviction.

PROFESSOR KOCH has gone to the cholera infected districts of Russia to renew his investigations into the cause of the disease, paying special attention to the comma bacillus.

THE New York Sun's estimate points to a wheat yield in Minnesota and the Dakotas of 100,000,000 to 120,000,000 bushels if the frosts hold off until the later sown crop matures.

WORLD'S FAIR NOTES.

THE Fine Arts building at the World's Fair will have a mosaic floor, the contract for which has been let at \$10,000.

ONTARIO (Canada) breeders of