

SILAS SUGGS IS DEAD.

SNAKE CHARMING EVANGELIST FATALLY BITTEN.

While He Preached the Word He Was Safe, but When He Accepted Fithy Lucre, He Was Stung to Death—A Remarkable Man.

SILAS SUGGS, miracle worker, is dead. The big rattlesnake that had so long refused to bite him struck at last, and in less than an hour the white haired old giant who had so often horrified the throngs of people his strange doings drew around him by opening the jaws of that rattler with his thumbs was a dead man. Suggs claimed that he had a divine mission, and proved it by passages out of the Scriptures which clearly showed that no others but those called of God could immuno handle rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths and water moccasins. Silas Suggs was 48 years old. He was a failure as a farmer, and for sixteen years had made his living as a silversmith. The peculiar religious phase of his character developed about five years ago, when he evolved a sort of theology from the Bible in which snakes and Christianity seemed to bear about equal parts. According to him, Christ's mission on earth was to repeal that law which ordains enmity between mankind and the snake, whose persuasion brought about the fall. Suggs was very careful about his snakes. They could bite him as much as they would, but he invariably handled them as though they were glass and he was afraid of breaking them. In the autumn he turned them loose among the rocks of Illinois, and he said they always came back in the spring.

In his big deal box he carried a four foot rattlesnake, three or four copperheads of various sizes, a five-foot cottonmouth or highland moccasin, several water moccasins, and a puffing adder. For several months this strange man had been going from town to town in Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky and Tennessee preaching with a rude eloquence that wonderfully stirred the rustic sinners ranged around, and afterwards performing miracles before the affrighted gaze of thousands. His followers claimed that he performed miracles, for how else could he plunge his bare arms into a big box of writhing, wriggling, hissing snakes, the most deadly known on the continent, allow them to bite his hands and arms time and again, and live. And he did this and then demonstrated that the snakes had not been rendered innocuous by the removal of their fangs by letting them immediately afterwards bite chickens and dogs, which speedily died. Then he would let the same snakes bite his hands and arms again. But all this time Suggs himself was unable to frame an explanation of the big rattler's failure to bite.

Just after his story was told in the Journal in June, this huge diamond-back rattler was captured in the Bay Bottoms, and, on Suggs' return from Nashville, presented to him for miracle purposes. Suggs thrust his arm into the rattler's improvised den as unhesitatingly as though reaching for the best rolled Conestoga in a box, and drew him forth, remarking at the same time that unless his "pizen works" were in working order, he didn't need him. Inserting his thumb between the rattler's jaws, Suggs examined the venom glands, dues and fangs, with a careless air, and then pitched his latest ophidian arrival into the cracker box



SUGGS' AWFUL DEATH.

along with the others. But, unlike the others, the diamond back refused to bite him, even when scratched between the eyes with a spear of timothy a few days ago.

Suggs was on his return home after an itinerary embracing the county fairs and fall sessions of Circuit Court in Egypt. He wore new store clothes, and his pockets bulged with silver, the offerings of the awe-struck witnesses of his miracles. Just after a hearty dinner a score of his followers had gathered about the hotel porch, and Silas was urged to show what he could do with the snakes for one last time before he returned to his little lonely log cabin just over the Pope county line. What he did and what followed is only what he had done with impunity a hundred times before.

He opened the box and thrust in his bared arms. The snakes coiled and writhed about his arms. He drew forth the wriggling, hissing mass and let the snakes wind about his neck and hang across his shoulders. The big rattler did no more than give a keener buzz and shriller whirr than had ever before formed the note of his formidable rattle and clung with his back and yellow folds closely to the old man's arm.

Suggs lifted his hands as if about to begin an exhortation. The big rattler quick as lightning uncoiled and struck the poor old self-deceived, mentally beclouded evangelist just above the right eye. Suggs groaned, staggered to a bench on the hotel porch, a doctor was quickly summoned, a freshly killed chicken clapped to the rapidly swelling bitten part, a quart of whisky poured into his mouth, all in vain. Within an hour he was dead. His bouful of snakes escaped under the plank sidewalks and in the high weeds that overgrew the adjacent vacant lots.

FEAR FOUL PLAY.

Postmaster W. L. Gillham of Upper Alton is still missing. No word has been received from W. L. Gillham, the missing postmaster of Upper Alton, Ill. The United States authorities have taken possession of the postoffice, through his bondsmen, who have instructions to withhold the books from him should he return. Members of his family express the utmost confidence that his affairs both in the office and in his private business will be found perfectly straight. They profess to have little fear that he will return and explain, but the fact that he has sent no word since the matter has been published broadcast, where it must have met his eyes, if alive, is in itself alarming. There are rumors abroad that tend to reflect upon his character and temperament, but these are so utterly at variance with his previous life and habits that they are given no credence, and the theory of foul play seems the most tenable.



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Died of Excessive Joy.

Mrs. Nellie Harbon, 26 years old, died suddenly at her home, 256 Cleveland street, Brooklyn, the other morning, and Coroner Nason, who held the inquest, said death was due to the bursting of a blood vessel in the brain, caused by excitement. Mrs. Harbon's maiden name was Nellie Hayden, and three years ago she met Charles J. Harbon, a sailor in the United States navy. They were married on Jan. 19, 1895, and the following October Harbon was sent to the Southern Pacific station. During the first year of his absence he wrote regularly, and then his wife failed to hear from him and believed he was dead. Two weeks ago the Annapolis landed at Key West, and Harbon wrote to his wife that he was alive and well, and would be home to spend Christmas with her. She was overjoyed, and two days ago when Harbon arrived the excitement caused his wife to become hysterical. She complained of headache, and Harbon kissed her. She said it soothed her, and then fell fainting in his arms. He placed her on a lounge and summoned Dr. Frank Senior of Arlington avenue, who, on his arrival, pronounced the woman dead.

Satisfied with His Keeper.

An English gentleman engaged a strong and powerful Highlander to act as gamekeeper on his estate. The Highlander, having been a considerable time at his post before there was any prosecution of poachers, his master began to think that his new gamekeeper was not a good hand at catching poachers. He determined to find out whether the man did his duty or not, and, accordingly, one dark night he disguised himself and went out with a gun to poach on his own grounds. He had only fired one or two shots when he was suddenly pounced upon from behind and his gun taken from him. Then kicks and blows were showered on him till he fell down half insensible. He was seriously ill for a fortnight afterward; but now he never doubts whether the man can perform his duty or not.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Tortured by Tramps.

Mrs. Caroline Norris and her grandson, Samuel, were last week burned to death in their home, a log cabin, near Piney Plain, in the southern part of Alleghany county, Maryland. The section is an isolated one.

Mrs. Norris was found lying across a stove dead and terribly burned, and her grandson was in the same condition. It is thought that the house was entered by tramps, who, knowing that she had money in the house always, tortured her to get it. It is believed that three tramps in jail at Martinsburg, arrested for robbery, perpetrated the crime.

Nerve, for Sure.

A great Indian cannon, the largest smooth bore in the world, captured many years ago by the British, is fitted up on the inside with seats, which are greatly affected by British officers as a cool and quiet nook in which to enjoy a siesta.

Five and a half ounces of grapes are required to make one glass of good wine.

THEATRICAL TOPICS.

CURRENT NEWS AND GOSSIP OF THE STAGE.

Can Women Write Plays?—The Answer Is Anyone Can Write Plays but Not Everyone Can Get Them Acted—Biographical Sketch of Maude Adams.

CAN Women Write Plays? was the subject of a debate before the Playgoers' Club in London lately. The question has been answered through the centuries, says the New York Times, by Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Centlivre, Miss Mitford, Mrs. Bateman, Mrs. Mowatt, Mme. Marguerite, Mrs. Burnett, Mrs. Ryley, Miss Merrington, Miss Morton and a host of other women. As a matter of fact, anybody can write plays. But not every one can get them acted. Lady Bancroft, at the meeting in question, told a tale to that effect. A woman submitted a play to her at the Prince of Wales' Theater, with the assurance that it contained the finest and most dramatic "situation" ever conceived by any playwright, ancient or modern. And, briefly described, the situation was this: The former lover of a married lady intruded himself upon the latter's presence, and in the course of their colloquy there enters a faithful moment—the husband. So overcome is his frail spouse by the discovery that she almost faints, but, recovering herself before finally collapsing, she exclaims, turning to her visitor, "I beg your pardon, I have not introduced you," and proceeds to formally present him to her husband. Lady Bancroft was highly impressed by the originality of the "situation," but the play never saw the light under her auspices.

W. Snarleyow Gilbert, says Stephen Fisk, is so angry at the failure of his latest attempt to write a serious play that he abuses the London critics and the London actors and the London managers. Everybody, in his opinion, except himself, is prejudiced and incompetent. Gilbert has always posed as a cynic. He is like the low comedian who yearns to play Hamlet. Having made fame and fortune by his comicities, he resents the fact that he is unable to write seriously. The critics, managers and actors whom he now reviles have done more for him than he has the grace to acknowledge. How his clever humor can exist in such a sour nature is one of the mysteries of Providence.

Maud Adams was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in November, 1872. Her father's name was Kiskadden and her

mother was of the Quincy Adams stocks. At the time of her birth her mother was leading woman in a stock company at the principal theater in the Mormon capital. When the infant Maude was but nine months old she made an emergency debut upon the stage in "The Lost Child." Five years later she made her second appearance, this time with J. K. Emmett, with whom her mother was then playing. She afterwards won favorable notice as the child in "A Celebrated Case." Shortly after this she was sent to the Presbyterian School for Girls in Salt Lake City, where she remained until she had reached the age of sixteen. In spite of the effort made during her school life to divert her inclination from the stage, she immediately upon leaving school, returned to the glare of the footlights, appearing at the Bijou theater, this city, in "A Midnight Bell," and when it was withdrawn she joined Charles Frohman's forces. She won much fame as the ingenue in "Men and Women," and by her creation of Nell, the crippled working girl, in "The Lost Paradise." In September, 1892, Miss Adams became leading woman for John Drew, a position she retained and filled with credit until the close of the season. She made her debut as a star, under the management of Charles Frohman, at Washington, D. C., Sept. 13 of the present year, appearing in J. M. Barrie's four act comedy, "The Little Minister." Her metropolitan stellar debut, in the same



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play, followed at Empire theater, Sept. 27. Her success was almost without precedent, and it is claimed that she played to the largest receipts in the history of the house. Two weeks ago it became necessary to transfer her to the Garrick theater, where she is still delighting audiences that tax the capacity of the house. Miss Adams is naturally proud of her success, but it has in no way spoiled her. She delights in study, and gives much attention to the harp and banjo, and to the acquisition of the French language.

The Elizabethan Stage Society, of London, gives occasional performances of Elizabethan plays in as nearly as possible the way these works were originally performed. For instance, "The Tempest" was lately acted or declaimed from a bare stage or platform with an upper stage or balcony for the masque and the comings and goings of Ariel and the other spirits, and with dresses copied from prints of a masque of the period. The old English music was rendered by viol and virginal, pipe and tabor. There was no break in the representation because the text in the quartos is not divided into acts and scenes.

Today, says Blanche Marsden, we don't see any tomboy plays for skittish ladies, in short skirts, blonde wigs and girly, girly ways. It is some time since Minnie Palmer wigged through three acts of "My Sweetheart,"



BLANCHE MARSDEN.

or since Lotta took the middle of the stage to save her father, and bring the curtain down. "Miss" died with poor Annie Pixley, and "Fanchon" ceased to attract attention when Maggie Mitchell made up her mind that she was old enough to know better, and stopped dancing in the moonlight to the shadow.

John Philip Sousa's new comic opera, "The Bride Elect," will receive its first presentation on any stage at the Hyperion theater, New Haven. On Jan. 3, Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger and B. D. Stevens will place the opera on the stage of the Boston theater, and in its cast will be Albert Hart, Nella Bergen, Christie Macdonald, Lillian Carlsmith, Frank Pollock, Melville Stewart and Harry Luckstone. These with

AUSTRIA'S PREMIER.

A NEW MAN AT THE HELM OF THE EMPIRE.

He Is a Middle-of-the-Roader, and Is Not a Strong Character Individually—Has Admirers on All Sides, However, and May Succeed.

BARON GAUTSCH VON FRANKENTHURN, the new premier of Austria, is recognized by all parties as the man best able to master the present situation. He did not espouse the cause of any one faction, and because of the able and impartial manner in which he discharged his duties as minister of public instruction under the premiership of Count Badeni, he enjoys the confidence of all. His wide knowledge of affairs and his diplomatic methods recommended him to the high position to which he has been appointed. It is thought that he will devise some amicable means of patching up the existing differences of the German and Bohemian speaking people of the empire. The baron is one of the most scholarly men of the empire and an orator of no mean ability. His speeches before parliament have always attracted a throng. He is the author of several legal works. The people love him and delight to refer to him as a self-made man. His father was a captain of police in the City of Vienna. The son was educated at the famous Theresianum Academy, which was founded by Empress Marie Therese, and before the revolution in 1848 was attended only by the sons of noble families. In 1873 he entered official service in the department of war and public in-

struction, where his talents gained him rapid advancement. In 1881 he was honored by being chosen director of the Theresianum Academy. In 1885 he was made minister of war and public instruction, one of the most important positions in the cabinet. He was then only 34 years old, and it is said that no other man has received this appointment at so early an age. In 1893 he retired from the cabinet with Count Taffe, but was again chosen to the same office in 1895 under the premiership of Count Badeni. One of the most conspicuous of his services is the reform of instruction in the high schools and universities. He married the daughter of Schlumberger, the celebrated wine grower. Their eldest daughter was married a few weeks ago to Baron Klein, secretary of the provincial government of Moravia, the wedding being an especially brilliant event in Vienna society. The baron is tall and fine looking, with a handsome face. His hair was gray before he was 35.



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Germs Killed by Heat.

In view of the destructive effect of sunlight, especially of the blue to the ultraviolet rays, upon bacteria in winter, Professor H. Marshall Ward would explain the comparative freedom of waters under the blazing hot summer sun from bacteria, as against the more abundant infection of the same waters in winter. Pasteur and Miguel found that the germs floating in the air are, for the most part, dead—killed, the author holds, by the sun. Yeasts which normally vegetate on the exterior of ripening grapes are destroyed, according to Martinaud, if the heat be very intense, and Guinot has observed that the ingress of sunlight hinders acetic fermentation. When the typhoid bacillus falls into turbid, dirty water in summer it finds a congenial propagating place. The dirt furnishes it food, absorbs heat to increase the warmth, and keeps off the hostile blue and violet rays.

Becoming Manish.

A Springfield reporter has discovered that confirmed athletic habits, encouraged by the example of successive college football games in town, have resulted in a notable increase in the size of the feminine hand and foot. At the Springfield glove counter, "formerly the demand was for fives and fives and a half, but now six and six and a half is a fair average. The same tendency is noticeable in shoes."—Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

The Chilkoot the Worst.

Henry De Windt, the famous globe-trotter, says: "I have roughed it for the past fifteen years in Siberia, in Borneo and in Chinese Tartary, but I can safely describe my climb over the Chilkoot pass as the severest physical experience of my life."

INFLUENCE OF THE VOICE.

Soft and Musical Speech One of Woman's Greatest Charms.

Eleanor Morton Parker, writing of "The Voice" in the December Woman's Home Companion, says: "It has long been conceded that a pleasant voice is one of woman's greatest charms. And many of us can verify this truth for ourselves by recalling the sweet influence of some woman, who like the lovely Cordelia, spoke in accents soft and low. A pretty face and a musical voice go well together, but of the two the latter is preferable. The power of a truly good woman possessing such a gift cannot be overestimated, especially if she is refined and intellectual. Her harmonious tones fall with a restful cadence upon the ear of the invalid. They are peace for the weary, balm for the sorrowful, and are frequently more efficacious than a sermon in touching the obdurate hearts of the wayward.

"On the contrary, we sometimes find rare beauty of feature seriously marred by the incongruity of a disagreeable voice. It is said of the Empress Eugenie that the stranger was enraptured with her wonderful beauty, but the moment she spoke all admiration was forgotten in the unpleasant sensation caused by her harsh Spanish voice. American women as a rule are not blessed with particularly musical voices. The colds, catarrh and bronchial trouble to which the sudden changes of our climate subject us more or less affect the vocal organs. In fact, soft, rippling utterance seems to belong more generally to lands of eternal summer. Yet any woman, no matter how great her natural defects may be, can, with few exceptions, bring her voice within a becoming key, and by proper care and exercise cultivate distinct, well-modulated tones. And it is her duty to do so, since nothing will more certainly bring upon her social ostracism than neglect in this regard.

"We are tired of being taunted by foreigners with our boisterous, loud-talking girls and women, when we know that many of those who make such unfavorable impressions upon strangers are at heart kind, gentle and refined. Let us hope that with the present movement for physical culture and voice culture and every other kind of culture, the noisy, garrulous woman of street-car and watering-place fame will have soon passed away, and in her stead come a being who will not converse as though every one within hearing were deaf, and she were bound to finish the sentence she is bent on uttering that very moment or never. There is no greater assurance of a happy home than a calm, well-regulated voice, and the woman who possesses it has won half the victory toward social and domestic success."

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ROYALTY TO BE MATED.

A Russian Grand Duchess Is Looking for a Suitable Husband.

Sixteen years old and a first cousin of the czar, the Grand Duchess Helena is not likely long to remain in the matrimonial market. In fact, royal matchmakers have already begun to cast about for a suitable husband for her highness. Her father is the Grand Duke Vladimir, brother of the late Emperor Alexander, and her mother is the Grand Duchess Marie, born of Mecklenburg, a family which has supplied several consorts to the reigning house in Russia. The Grand Duchess Marie is a clever and intellectual woman. There is little of the typical high-bred Russian about the young grand duchess. In fact, she resembles an English girl, and, like most English girls, spends much of her time in indulging in outdoor sports. Like most Russians, she is extremely fond of music, and during her frequent visits to Paris with her parents she is often allowed to accompany them to the opera. As it is the Russian custom for the daughters of the imperial house to appear at public festivities at a much earlier age than are the children of other royal families, the grand duchess has already appeared at many of the



THE GRAND DUCHESS HELENE

state functions of the court and has created a decidedly favorable impression.

English Humor.

A gentleman went to look over a house that was to be let furnished. He was piloted through the rooms by a very pretty housemaid. As he was leaving he turned to the girl, saying: "And are you to be let with the house?" "No, sir," she replied. "I am to be let alone."—London News.

Sense in Mexico.

It has been determined to raise up an ambidextrous generation in the state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and the government has ordered that the pupils in all the official schools shall be taught to write and perform all manual tasks as well with the left hand as with the right.