

# GYPSY CHIEF DEFENDS RACE

Says Popular Belief Crediting Them with Evil Lives Is a Survival of Old-Time Superstition.

## TESTIMONY SUPPORTS HIS CLAIM

Massachusetts Lawyer Declares He Has Studied Habits of the Wandering People and Has Found Little to Warrant Condemnation---Have Never Been Kidnapers of Children.

Boston.—"Be good children, or the gypsies will get you." For hundreds of years mothers and nurses have used this style of admonition with refractory children, for since the advent of the gypsies into England from the east in the sixteenth century, popular opinion has associated them with thievery and kidnapping and thriftless ways, with sorceries and incantations and things that loom terrible to the childish mind. Famous writers have pictured them as incorrigible rascals, the public who have seen only the nomadic features of their life have built up many superstitions around this ancient people, until to-day to be a gypsy is to be an outcast, a nameless wanderer upon the earth, feared and distrusted by all men save the few whose dealings with the gypsy folk have taught them better.

But have not Borrow and Groome and Charles Godfrey Leland and Sir Walter Scott fallen into the error of accepting prevalent beliefs without

dict the many lies that are circulated about our manner of life and our methods of doing business. But many times I have been tempted to write something about our people, that other people may know them better, for nothing accurate has been written that I can find."

Valley Stanley is known from Boston to Worcester and throughout all the outlying country. He is the hereditary chief of his tribe, for, like kingship, leadership among the gypsies is usually hereditary. His people camp at Somerville during the summer months, though they move about to some extent as his business as a horse trader demands. At present he is living in Everett, while the people of his tribe are distributed throughout Everett and Lynn for the winter.

**Gypsy Held in Respect.**

"I would take Valley Stanley's word that I would not take another man's bond," said an Everett horse dealer of the chief of the Stanley tribe. "Why, I know his father, Bill Stanley, chief of the tribe before him. There was never a straighter man in the horse-dealing business than Bill Stanley."

That is the idea formed of two gypsy chiefs by a man intimately associated with them in a business that offers great opportunities for sharp work. "Perhaps you yourself have been frightened when a child by somebody telling you to 'watch out or the gypsies will get you'" said the chief's son. "That is because people have the idea that gypsies go in for kidnapping children. They have usually carried this idea in their minds since they themselves were children, when they received it from their parents in precisely the same way. That is absolutely a wrong idea of us. Why should we kidnap? We have children enough of our own, quite as many as we can take care of."

"Then they accuse us of being addicted to stealing. That is a lie. We know the value of a good reputation in our business, and if we had no higher standard of honor than that it would be sufficient to keep us honest. I think that if you will inquire among the people with whom we have done business you will find we bear an excellent name for honesty. This misconception of thievish tendencies is inherited, and it has been fostered by the depredations of many wanderers who are not gypsies at all, but have taken to a nomadic existence for sheer love of idleness and freedom from responsibility. I know of Frenchmen, of Irishmen and of Germans who travel about the country posing as gypsies, when they have not a drop of gypsy blood in their veins and none of the gypsy code of living."

"Some of us are fairly well educated. Much of that education has been obtained by contact with the world, but the world is a good university, and one doesn't forget the lessons one learns there. When a gypsy leaves the life of his forefathers and applies himself to the usual pursuits of civilization, he generally succeeds, which proves that the gypsy is a man of intelligence. I have a cousin who is mayor of a large town and another who is head of a considerable shoe manufactory."

**Personal Characteristics.**

"Look at me. Do I look like an Egyptian? Am I dark, or swarthy, or fierce of aspect?"

Tom Stanley is a well-set-up man above the average height, no darker than most dark men of Caucasian blood. He speaks English well, and away from the environments of his summer camp has as little of the air of the gypsy—the gypsy of fiction, that is—as a business man.

"Yet people picture me and my people in their imaginations as half-savage wanderers, akin to the Egyptians or the orientals. Look at this little girl of mine. Does she look like an Indian child?"

He thrust forward a bashful tot of about seven years, a flaxen-haired child with big blue eyes. She, too, was as far removed from the popular idea of the gypsy as Peary is now from the north pole.

"I am of American blood, but of English descent. My people lived in Worcester a few generations ago, and

my great-great-grandfather was a Bristol man. The Stanley family is a good one in England.

"Yet we are gypsies, descended from a long line of gypsies. We speak the Roman tongue, which is a language in general use among gypsies the world over, though it varies greatly according to the country in which a tribe lives."

"The next time anyone tells you that we have no religion, do not believe it. We have our religion, precisely as you or any other man who is not a gypsy has his. Many of our people are Baptists; some belong to other Christian denominations. When a gypsy does become enthusiastic over his religion he makes not infrequently what you call a great revivalist. That is his temperament."

"This temperament shows again in the music of the gypsies. Although this music is entirely by ear, many great composers have conceded that it is effective and accurate, even though wild in character. The gypsies in Hungary and Russia and Poland are noted as musicians."

**Mr. Sinclair's Testimony.**

What the son of the chief of the Somerville gypsies says about the gypsy folk is borne out by Mr. Sinclair. He does, in fact, destroy many a cherished illusion.

"A good many of them are members of the Baptist church, and speak at the prayer meetings with all the fervor of the other members. Oftentimes I have heard them exhort visitors to their camps about the blessings and necessity of a Christian life," he says.

And he adds that they are not given to thieving more than any other "poor, ignorant people and the community where they are found." Mr. Sinclair's conclusions with respect to the American gypsy are identical with a report sent him by the governor general of Russian Central Asia on the gypsy folk of his country, who have the reputation of being thieves and cheats, but "according to the reports of our administrative officials, they behave themselves well."

As to their alleged propensity to steal children, an idea fostered by superstition and the melodrama, Mr. Sinclair says that is all a myth.

"All the gypsies in the vicinity of Boston know me as 'Lawyer Sinclair,' and for many years I have been consulted by them when in trouble. There have been a good many cases when children were lost and the gypsies were suspected of kidnapping them. Often their camps have been searched and they have been subjected to much annoyance and trouble. In no case, however, has it been found to be true that they had taken any children."

**A Case in Point.**

"One case, I remember, excited great interest in the newspapers at the time it occurred. A Willie McCormick disappeared in Boston, and his loss was heralded all over the country in large headlines by the newspapers. Finally two Russian gypsy girls were arrested in Washington for stealing him. A Boston detective was sent to Washington. The two girls were kept under arrest for many days and subjected to a rigid cross-examination, as was the whole gypsy camp. Finally it was discovered that these gypsies had never had or seen the boy."

"The question has been one I have considered carefully for 25 years, and I have made very many inquiries, but I have never even heard of a case where gypsies have even stolen a single child."

Mr. Sinclair says that they know too well that were they to steal anything they would be suspected at once and searched; and they

multitudes that followed Moses out of Egypt—efforts have been made to trace their origin to each of these sources. The most commonly accepted theory is that they are of Indian origin, and their language, Romani, shows many resemblances to the Hindu.

Leaving their early home in northwestern India about the year 900, the gypsy folk, driven by the irruptions of the hordes of Genghis Khan, started on their long march of centuries. Taking the direction of Kabulistan and Persia, they penetrated into Egypt and northern Africa and migrated west through Asia Minor into Turkey.

Their earliest abiding place on the continent of Europe was Greece. As early as 1398 a gypsy chieftain named



A Gypsy, but Doesn't Look It.

John was established with a large following under Venetian rule. They are recorded in Switzerland in 1418, in Denmark in 1420 in Italy in 1423, in France and Spain in 1442, in Poland and Russia about 1500, and in England not long after. It was the depredations and the frequent atrocities practiced by these large invading hordes that gained for the gypsies their bad name, a name that has stuck to them ever since.

**The Last Migration.**

Their last migration was to America and Australia, nearly three centuries later. These bands were mostly English gypsies, although many bands from the continent of Europe are to be found in the United States. But whatever nationality a tribe belonged to, it retained the Romani language, the language common to all gypsies. This is not a simple jargon or cant. It is a true and complete language, especially in the farther east, where the gypsies have remained compact, and it possesses a considerable vocabulary and a highly developed system of inflections. This language has naturally been influenced to a considerable extent by the country of adoption, the broken dialect of the English gypsies, which is the language of the majority of the American tribes, being a strange mixture of English and Romani.

How many gypsies are there in the world? It would be impossible to take a census of these roving people. When they first made their appearance in Asia and in Europe they were often many thousands strong, under chieftains who styled themselves counts, or "kings of Little Egypt," the gypsies encouraging the belief that they were Egyptians suffering banishment, in order to secure tolerance and assistance from the people whom they encountered in their migrations. The



One of Their Chief Sources of Income.

reputations too much, on account of their means of livelihood.

"Here in America the gypsies boast that not one gypsy has ever been sent to jail," said Mr. Sinclair, and he asserts that neither district attorneys nor policemen can contradict the boast.

How, then, did it ever come to pass that the gypsies obtained the unsavory reputation they bear? It is declared to be simply a case of the sins of the father being visited upon the children, an instance of a bad name clinging to a people through centuries.

**Origin Hard to Trace.**

Of their own origin the gypsies can give no exact account, many of them following the popular belief that they came originally from Egypt. The Saracens, the Jews, the Canaanites, the lost tribes of Israel, or the mixed

gypsies must number well into the millions, for in Roumania alone and in various parts of the Balkan regions, Hungary and Russia, there are over 500,000.

**No Change.**

Edgar inadvertently swallowed a silver quarter dollar, for which the village doctors probed in vain. Some one asked his small brother if the physicians had been successful in recovering the money. "No, sir," he answered, earnestly, "not a penny of it."

**Starch in Grains.**

The percentage of starch in the four grains named is as follows: Wheat flour, 66 per cent.; corn meal, 65 per cent.; rice, 79 per cent.; rye meal, 69 per cent. The order of digestibility is as follows: Rice, corn, wheat, rye.

### Joshua's Farewell Message

A Story of the Conquest of Canaan by the Hebrew People. By the "Highway and Byway" Preacher.

(Copyright, 1917, by the Author, W. B. Eason.)

Scripture Authority:—Joshua, chapters 23, 24.

#### SERMONETTE.

"Joshua, the servant of the Lord."—Such is the testimony of the writer of the sacred narrative at the close of the life of Joshua. No costly monument was reared to the memory of the great leader, but there has come down the ages this record that he served God.

And what greater or more enduring record could be written of any man? It at once declares the character of such a man; it testifies to the permanency of his life work; it gives assurance of the abiding influence of such a life upon the lives of others.

Let us consider these points. First, the character of the servant. He who is truly a servant of God, must be God-like. More is needed than the title and the garb of outward seeming. The right to the title, "servant of the Lord," must be tested by what a man is and does. Not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord," is entitled to the name and livery of "servant of the Most High." The true servant is one with his master in purpose and desire. He studies to know and do the will of his master. He delights to be like his master and to be identified with him. How perfectly was this expressed in the life of Jesus. As servant of God he lived the God life on earth. The life of God flowed through him just as he would have it flow through us. The true servant is the branch which abides in the vine and obtains its life therefrom.

And now as to what the servant does. The true servant is busy about his Lord's business. It must be so, else he is disloyal and unfaithful. To be a servant implies service. The idle, careless, indifferent, neglectful servant is no servant at all, and not worthy of the name. But what may we know of the life work of the true servant of the Lord? We may know first that it has helped work out the eternal purposes of God in the world. We may know in the second place that the measuring rod of eternity, not that of time, must be used to declare the quantity and quality of the work. We may know also that the service rendered on earth was but the beginning of the service to be rendered in Heaven. What an inspiration in the thought that he who works and builds with God here works and builds with God for eternity.

And then there is the abiding influence of the true servant of God, which goes on and on in ever widening circles among men. This thought is expressed in the declaration concerning Abel, who offered acceptable sacrifice to God, that "being dead, he yet speaketh." And from Abel down take the record of the true servants of the Lord as set forth in the Word of God, and who can estimate the influence which has gone out from those lives. Though dead, they continue to speak their message to the hearts of men. Joshua, the servant of the Lord. What a glorious comment on his life. Servant of the Lord! May we all strive to be worthy of the name and relationship.

THE STORY.

THE years following the conquest of Canaan and the division of the land among the various tribes, bringing as they did their peace, and security and prosperity—for the land brought forth abundantly—gave Joshua the rest he longed for and needed, for with the advancing years he had felt more and more the burdens of leadership. A feeling of contentment and satisfaction filled his heart as he beheld each tribe contentedly settled upon its inheritance. The tabernacle had been set up in Shiloh, and the priests and Levites ministered before the Lord, while the people worshiped without at the appointed seasons. The mercies and blessings of the Lord were so fresh in mind, and the mighty victories which the Lord had given them were of such recent occurrence that there was no thought or desire to mingle with the heathen nations about them or to be even so much as drawn away by idle curiosity in the worship of their idols.

All this, as we have said, brought cheer and satisfaction to the aged leader's heart, and encouraged the hope that whatever had been the failures in the past, however grievous had been their disobedience and lack of faith, the people had at last learned the wisdom and reward of serving the true God and would not again depart from him. This confidence

served to blind Joshua to any tendency towards waywardness on the part of the people, and for some time now he had ceased to require the detailed report from the elders. Thus the weeks and months slipped by, and more and more Joshua and those about him realized that the infirmities of age were telling upon him.

"No, it will not be long before the Lord will come for me," he said one day. "But I am ready to go, for peace has come to the land and the people are wholly given to the serving of the Lord."

But that night his sleep was troubled, and he beheld strange things in his dreams. He thought Moses stood by his side and was pointing towards the people gathered before the tabernacle, and saying:

"How soon they will forget! How soon they will forget! As in former time so will they again turn from the Lord."

And as he turned to protest, Moses vanished from his sight and he awoke with a start.

The dream troubled him and for days he studied over it, until it seemed that it must have been a vision and not a dream, and that Moses had really spoken to him. Would the people turn from the Lord after he had gone? Would they forget his mercies and blessings and go after the gods of the people about them? he asked himself, over and over again.

"Before I go I must warn them. My last message shall be an appeal to them to be faithful to the God who has been so faithful to them."

And so Joshua sent his messengers through all the land whither the children of Israel had settled, asking that they all come to Shechem. Now Shechem was the place where solemn convocation had been held when they had first come into the land years before, and the blessings and the cursings of God had been read in their ears by the Levites. And it was here that Joshua gathered the people together with their elders and their officers and judges, and said unto them:

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Your fathers dwell on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau; and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt."

Joshua paused in his hasty review of the early history of the nation, and if there had been any inattention at the beginning, at the mention of Egypt all eyes and ears were turned towards him. He then went on to rapidly cover God's wonderful dealings with them in Egypt, of his leading them out under the hand of Moses; of his miraculous deliverances and care all through the wilderness journey, and of his bringing them at last into the promised land and giving them the victory over all their enemies.

"Now, therefore," he concluded, "fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

The voice of the aged Joshua was almost a sob as he concluded his appeal, and with difficulty he controlled his feelings, for, as he was speaking, there was but one vision before him, that of Moses standing at his side pointing at the people and saying:

"As in former time so will they again turn from the Lord."

But all this faded before the shout which went up from the people as they answered and said:

"God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he is it that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed. And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwell in the land; therefore will we serve the Lord; for he is our God."

And Joshua said unto the people: "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord, to serve him."

And they said: "We are witnesses."

So Joshua, the aged leader, made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And he wrote these words of the people in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there under an oak, that was by the altar that had been reared to the Lord in that place. And Joshua said unto all the people: "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us; it shall be therefore a witness unto you lest ye deny your God."

**Used Them for Shoe Soles.**

Calling on an American consul in China, a Chinaman asked for trade catalogues, saying that he would prefer those with thick leaves, and it was eventually discovered that the catalogues were wanted as inside soles for shoes.