

The Miracle That Failed; An Incident of Mormonism.

The long discussion in the Senate of the various phases of the Reed Smoot case has had the effect of stimulating investigations of a number of the obscure features of Mormonism. A mass of historical matter has been brought to light by students of the growth of the cult and a great volume of material, wholly scattered, has been rediscovered and added to the data of origins.

Among this material is the story of the miracle that failed, involving the tragedy of a budding prophet who could not deliver the goods, a misfortune which came very near costing Joseph Smith a tight-fitting coat of tar and feathers as the penalty of his failure. The tale is told in an old history of Chenango County, New York, and has been overlooked by many of the historians and critics of Smith and the church he founded.

It happened at the little town of Afton, where Smith was married in 1827 and where he had lived for some time. Here he organized his society and practically began the strange propaganda that as the years passed trailed itself nearly across the continent until it reached the promised land of the shores of the great Salt Lake. Afton Smith drew about him a body of earnest converts, and his vigorous preaching, his strange personal magnetism, and his startling avowals of prophecy and inspiration attracted large crowds to his services. Finally, to put the capstone of achievement to his movement of pretensions, any to prove to the sneerers and revilers, of whom there were many, that he had divine attributes, he walked from shore to shore upon the waters of a creek that flowed near the town.

The feat came as the dramatic climax to a powerful sermon by which his hearers had been aroused to the point of frenzy and the ocular demonstration of his professed divinity, greeted with a Greek chorus of "A-mens," removed the last vestige of doubt from the minds of converts. According to the relation in the old country history, the news of the marvelous feat spread like wildfire throughout the adjacent country side. It was discussed at every crossroads store and was the one topic of conversation at every farm house and village home, even the revilers were subdued for the moment and the flock of converts increased rapidly.

Still there were many skeptics, for the Smith family had a very unsavory reputation in the neighborhood, and Joseph Smith in particular, according to the affidavits of some sixty of the prominent men of the vicinity, was held to be a person of absolutely no moral character, and of vicious drunken habits. They doubted and waited.

Smith's success was his undoing, according to the old history. The converts hungered for miracles. They wanted some more of the water-walking business as ocular proof for the flock of new adherents, and Smith rather reluctantly consented, for none knew better than he how repetition pens. When the day came great crowds lined the shore of the creek, everyone upon the tiptoe of expectancy. At the appointed hour, Smith appeared, and, with a tread of dignity and assurance, approached the bank at the spot roped off for him to make the trial. He removed his shoes and stockings and waded in. The great crowd held its breath. Necks were craned and staring eyes watched every movement of the prophet.

A murmur of surprise, a gasp of wonder swept over the crowd as Smith slowly and dramatically walked to-wards the water. When the day came great ward midstream, the water, well known to be ten or twelve feet deep at that point, coming only half way between his feet and knees. With unbelieving eyes the skeptics watched the progress of his majestic glide. Then suddenly, with a splash that threw the water of the muddy creek high in the air, the prophet disappeared, to come to the surface a moment later puffing and splurging around like any ordinary mortal under similar cold-bath circumstances.

A roar of laughter swept over the crowd, and a battery of sharp, crude brutal epithets and witticisms were turned loose upon him as he swam to the shore, and was pulled out by his devoted adherents. Some of the baser sort wanted to give Smith a dose of tar and feathers, but the discredited miracle worker was whisked away out of danger by some of his supporters, and the advice of the cooler headed among the crowd prevailed.

Investigation showed that Smith, according to the allegations, had built a submerged pier out into the river on piles, the tops of which came within about a foot of the surface of the mud-

dy water. On the piles boards had been placed, by means of which walking to the water was reduced to a fine and practical art.

It happened that while Smith was practicing this miracle in order to perform it without any chance of mishap, some boys, who had sought the secluded spot for a swim, surprised him at work. They watched him from hiding, and when he left they investigated. Keeping the secret of their discovery to themselves they waited until the day when he announced that he would one of the boards from the submerged point where the water was about ten feet deep. The prophet's involuntary bath was the dramatic result.

The same old history gives another story of Smith's undoing. He had declared from his pulpit that his person was divine, and that no one with safety could lay hands upon him to injure or hurt him. Soon after this rash assertion Smith was passing the house where lived Nathan Aplington, a young man of a strict inductive method. He sprang at the prophet, knocked him down, and gave him a bird of a whalloping, while Smith yelled for mercy, and was finally released much the worse for wear. Nathan said that he simply wanted to show that Smith was a liar.

Smith had quite a vogue in the vicinity of Afton as a caster-out of devils. Upon his trial upon the charge of being an imposter, several witnesses testified that they had seen Smith turn the trick. One said he saw a devil about the size of a woodchuck run away. Another witness said that a devil he had seen Smith exorcise from one man looked like a yellow dog when it left its victim.

But, of course, this testimony of the prophet's failures and shortcomings is from his home section, where no man can be either hero or sage. Driven from his own state, he succeeded in laying the foundation for a great

SOLOMON ISLES TROUBLED.

Civil War, Canibalism and Hurricane Combine Against Islands.

VICTORIA, Feb. 16.—The steamer Mlowera which arrived here yesterday from Australia, brought news that constant troubles were occurring in the Solomon Islands as a result of the repatriation of Kanakas, expelled from Queensland following the enactment of "White Australia" laws. H. M. S. Prometheus, a British warship, placed in the vicinity of the group to protect the returning blacks, shelled the village of Sulwa on Malaita, which so badly frightened the natives that they took to the brush and have not returned.

The missionaries fear a massacre by the villagers, who resent the return of the blacks.

From Papua news was brought a punitive expedition following a raid by cannibals on Cape Capola village, two children being killed and eaten, at a cannibal feast.

Shortly before the Mlowera left Brisbane advices were received that a hurricane had completely wiped out Cooktown, in North Australia.

No lives were lost. The monetary loss will amount to \$2,000,000.

OUTLOOK CHEERFUL.

Prices of Stocks Are Beginning to Recover Although Slowly.

NEW YORK, Feb. 16.—Prices of stocks have moved towards recovery this week in a somewhat halting and irregular way. The market has been free from pressure of liquidation and opinion has grown more cheerful over the outlook. Good results are expected from the proposed currency reform measures in the Senate. The assumption is common in the financial district that the financiers of influence regard as less formidable than they did the probable consequences of the government's attitude toward combinations of capital. The money market has been affected by the course of the withdrawal of Government deposits, from the banks, but less apprehension is felt of the longer money outlook and growing strength of our position in the international exchange.

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LEFT VICTIM TO DIE

Wealthy Automobilists Strike Aged Man and Flee from Spot.

KEPT SECRET FOR MONTHS

Searching Investigation by District Attorney Brings Two Young Men to Justice—Declare They Remained Silent.

CHICAGO, Feb. 16.—The mystery surrounding the killing of William Dreyer, who was run down by a speeding automobile, three miles west of Kenosha, Wis., July 24 last, was suddenly cleared yesterday when two men who were in the car which struck and mangled the man told the story of the affair in the courtroom at Kenosha. As a result of their testimony, Edward Collier, a former bicycle racer and later noted as an automobile expert was arrested, charged with manslaughter. He gave bond and was released.

The result of five months persistent work by district attorney Baker was accomplished when Frank L. Jackson, son of the late Johnson A. Jackson, a member of one of the prominent families of Kenosha, and Shelby Montgomery, son of E. W. Montgomery, a wealthy Galena, Ill., lumberman broke down and confessed.

Jackson and Montgomery said that they left Kenosha late on the night Gregor was killed and that Collier was driving the machine, the speed at the time of the tragedy being about twenty five miles an hour. Jackson said the old man appeared to be in a crumpling position by the roadside, as if about to rise, when suddenly Collier shouted:

"We've hit a man." The automobile was not stopped, but, on the other hand the speed of the car was increased and the party hurried away without stopping to learn the extent of their victim's injuries.

Jackson said the accident occurred at a time when his father, who died a month ago, was about to undergo a surgical operation, and he feared the shock, if the matter became known, would kill the sick man. Montgomery corroborated the statements of Jackson, and added that while the trio were hurrying away, they agreed not to disclose the facts with regard to striking of the man.

They traveled about all that night and did not know of Dreyer's death until the body was found the next day.

EMBALMED ALIVE.

CHICAGO, Ill., Feb. 16.—That thousands of infants in Illinois as well as many larger children, are being sent to premature graves through taking into their stomachs, in milk, the same poisonous preparations that is used to embalm the dead, is indicated by the special report ready for submission to Governor Denson by State Pure Food Commissioner H. A. Jaynes.

Commissioner Schuckmucht points out that of the thirty-five cities visited, not one escaped having sold within its limits milk from unclean and unsanitary cans and vessels or milk not properly strained, showing a deposit of filth in the bottom of the bottom of the bottles or other vessels, and in thirty-two of the cities skimmed milk was sold as standard, and was adulterated with formaldehyde, which authorities pronounce a poison "much used as an embalming fluid."

FUNERAL OF VICTIMS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 16.—A largely attended funeral over the bodies of three of the Salvation Army victims of the Larchmont disaster will be held tomorrow afternoon at Carnegie Music hall. There will be special music and Commander Booth will preside. The Salvationists who were lost in the disaster numbered ten men and women, several of them being officers.

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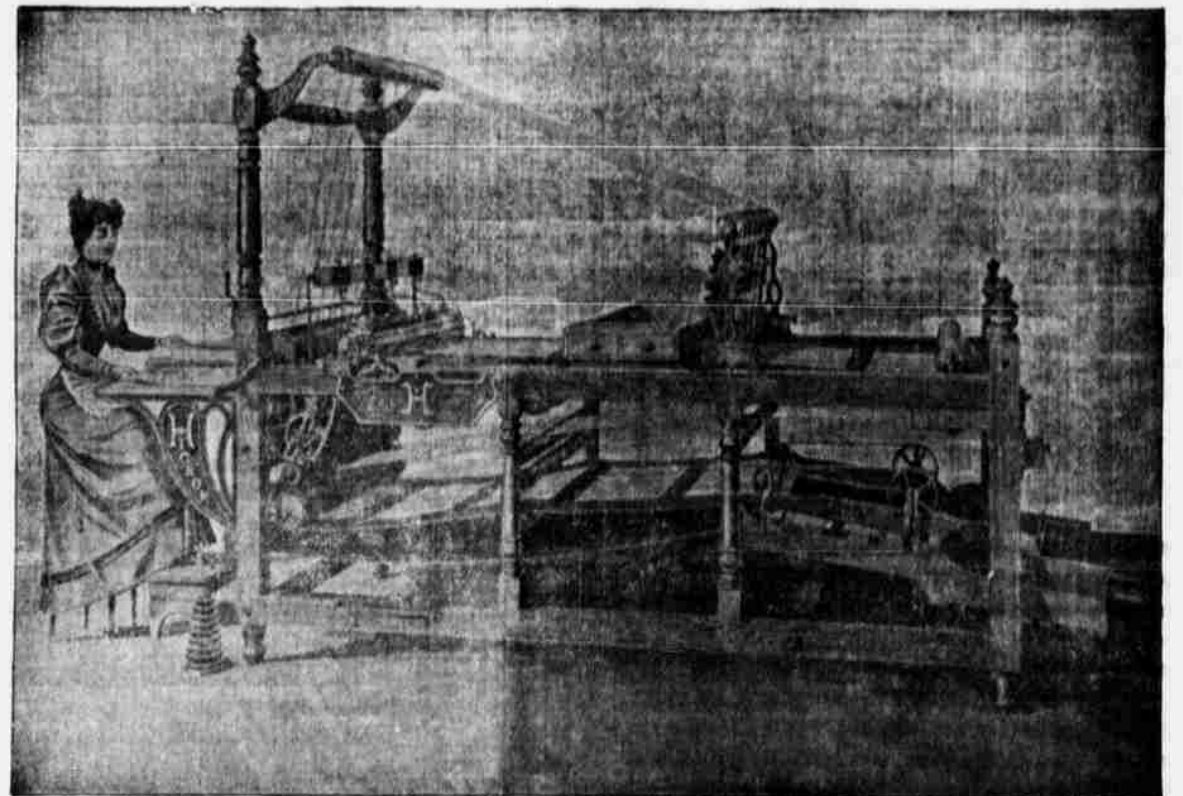
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