THOMPSON, OF TEXAS.

A DESPERADO WHO DID SOME SHOOTING AND WAS SHOT AT.

He Had a Terrible Record and Was Sent Material in Order to Help the Game—He Had Some Queer Ideas, but Was Absolutely Fearless.

The most notable Englishman who ever came to Texas was Ben Thompson. He arrived there at an early age and became as thoroughly western in his mode of life that Texans claim him as their own. I imagine, however, he always retained some of the traditions of his birthplace, as there is a story of his standing with his back to a tree in an English schoolroom when Thompson was a boy, was the most feared and the most known man in all Texas. The union of his recklessness and ignorance of fear and utter disregard of the value of others' lives, as well as his own, are remarkable.

Thompson killed eighteen men in different parts of Texas, and was for this time marshal of Austin, on the principle that if he must kill somebody it was better to give him authority to kill other superior than vegetable citizens. As marshal it was his pleasure to pull up to every arrival the railroad track just as the fully express train was about to start, and covering the engineer with his revolver bid him hold the train until he was ready to move on. He would then get some trembling acquaintance from the crowd on the platform and talk with him leisurely, until he thought he had sufficiently awed the engineer and established his authority. Then he would pick up his reins and drive on, saying to the engineer, "You needn't hick, sir; my corporation can hurry yo."

One day a cowboy, who was a well known bully and a would be desperado, had several bullet holes through the high hat of an eastern traveler who was standing at the bar of an Austin hotel. Thompson heard of this, and purchasing a high hat entered the barroom.

"I hear," he said, facing the cowboy, "that you are shooting plug hats here today; perhaps you would like to take a shot at mine." He then raised his revolver and had a shot at the cowboy's hat. "Gentlemen," he said, "this hit your eye; did it?" The bully showed proof that it had. "Well, then," said the marshal, "get out of here" and catching the man by his cartridge belt, he threw him out into the street, and so put an end to his reputation as a desperate character forever.

Thompson was naturally unpopular with a certain class in the community. The lawless, who had a personal grudge against him, with no doubt sufficient reason, lay in ambush for him behind the two bars of the saloon, which strolled along either wall. Thompson entered the room from the street, in ignorance of any plot against him, until the two men halted him with shotguns. They had him nicely at their pleasure but he made no effort to reach for his revolver, but stood looking from one to the other and smiling grimly. But his equanimity was so great and their fear of him so actual that both men missed him, although not twenty feet away and with shotguns in their hands. Then Thompson took out his pistol deliberately and killed them.

A few years ago he became involved in a fun Antonio with Jack Harris, the keeper of a gambling house and variety theater. Harris by in wait for Thompson behind the swinging doors of his saloon, but Thompson, as he crossed the military plaza, was warned of Harris' lying place and shot him through the eye. He was tried for the murder and acquitted on the ground of self defense, and on his return to Austin was met at the station by a brass band and all the companies. Perhaps flattered by this he returned to San Antonio, and going to Harris' theater, then in the hands of his partner, Joe Foster, called from the gallery for Foster to come up and speak to him. Thompson had with him a disguised named King Fisher, and against him every man of his class in San Antonio, for Harris had been very popular. Foster sent his assistant, a very young man named Bill Sims, to ask Thompson to leave the place, as he did not want trouble.

"I have come to have a reconciliation," said Thompson; "I want to shake hands with my old friend, Joe Foster. Tell him I won't leave till I see him, and I won't make a row."

Sims returned and Foster, and Thompson held out his hand.

"Joe," he said, "I have come all the way from Austin to shake hands with you. Let's make up and call it off."

"I don't shake hands with you, Ben," Foster said; "you killed my partner, and you know well enough I am not the man to forget it. Now go, won't you, and don't make trouble."

Thompson said he would leave in a minute, but they must drink together first. Foster and Thompson stood quite close before the bar. The marshal of Austin looked up and saw Foster's glass mysteriously follow him, and cried:

"Aren't you drinking with me, Joe?" Foster shook his head.

"Well, then," cried Thompson, "the man who won't drink with me must shake hands with me right now."

He reached back for his pistol, and some one, a friend of course intelligent enough to have decided it was not worth Bill Hickok's men three times in the forehead. They say you could have covered three bullet holes with a half dollar. Not so great was the desperate courage of this ruffian that even as he fell he fired, killing his revolver at his hip and killing Foster, and then, as he lay on his back, with every nerve jerking in agony, he emptied his revolver into the floor, slipping great gashes in the boards where he lay. And so he died, as he would have wished to die, with his boots on, and with the report of his pistol the last sound to ring in his ears. King Fisher was killed at the same moment, and a paper wrote up at the next morning as "A Gallant Nighty Work."—Richard Harding Davis in Harper's Weekly.

A EAST IRON MATCH.

How an Impetuous Dude with a Muzzle for Mouthing Has His Dog Come to Grief.

He hadn't been in the village very long—about ten days—came up from New York to spend his two weeks' vacation—and had brought his dog with him, an ugly, savage, vicious brute that had already terrorized the entire community, while he and the dog were the center of a circle of wide circumference whenever they walked abroad.

It was Saturday afternoon, and he strolled down the main street, a blaze of radiant in a black and yellow blazer, a broad sash and—a cigarette—dog following. He was out of matches, so he pulled up at the "grocery store and postoffice" to purchase some. He didn't inspire much awe among the congregated villagers, as they had already "wized him up," so that when Cy Blossom discovered on "Pete" comes that striped dude from Mulleses boardin house," it didn't cause any great excitement, but when Cy asked "with that dog of him" there was a shifting of legs and a sudden grasping of canes, umbrellas and chair backs.

"Speaking of matches," said he, as he passed two cents over the counter, took one out of the box and lit his cigarette, "are there any of you gentlemen about here that has a dog he would like to match against this dog of mine—great dog, grade—he's got a fine pedigree—he's a trained fighter and he can walk away with any dog of ten times his weight in this village—I'll just bet twenty five to one on that."

"Kind er think yer can't get no bets on that," said Seth Hawkins, the grocer and postmaster of the village; "there's no dogs roun here that's trained yer fight, an I never heer't of one that had any chins to a ped-ped-ee-gree."

"Hol on there, young feller," said a tall, raw-boned old fellow leaning up against the counter. "Hed ee; what's that ye bet, twenty-five ter one that dog o' yourn kin walk away with any dog in this village ten times his weight?"

"That's what I said."

"Wa-al, 'ere is my one—plunk out yer twenty-five." (He plunked it out.) "Seth, you hed the stakes. Now, young feller, jes' fetch yer dog along, an if he kin walk away with him I'll give yer fifty cents for every pound he weighs. Come on, boys."

It made quite a procession, he and his "dog" and about a dozen villagers—the latter in a bunch at a respectful distance from the former—the old fellows leading, and they all tramped up to a little ramshackle old house about a mile from the store. The old fellow pushed open the gate and they all entered a little inclosure that was strewn with old lumber, barrels, pieces of iron and odds and ends of all sorts. A man over the door of the shed roof, "Samuel Bolkin—old junk—pigs for sale."

"Now, mister, we all understan that dorg o' yourn is ter walk away with mine or I'm ter git twenty-five dollars."

"That's it," said he, tugging at his dog's collar. "Where's your pup?"

"There he is," said the old fellow, pointing to a heap of rubbish about fifty feet away. "We ain't got no ped-ped-e-etral, it got broke, but ye can walk away with him perhaps all the same."

It was a cast iron one—weighed 250 pounds.—New York Herald.

Complexions Under Electric Light.

When the electric light first came into vogue great alarm was created among the fair sex by the statement that the new light was an active agent in the creation of freckles. Since then the world has grown wiser, but still the ultrarutilfulness of the modern luminant in revealing the actualities of nature and artificialities of complexion met with in every ballroom has militated greatly against its popularity. A prominent New York society leader has earned the gratitude of millions of her sisters by the discovery that all its objectionable characteristics can be removed by covering the incandescent lamp with pale yellow silk.

The effect on the complexion is said to be "creamy and fascinating," and it may be taken for granted that beneforth the staunchest advocates of the electric light will be found among the sex that has found a new way of consecrating to lower tribute to their attractiveness.—Electricity.

Saving Pin Money.

With a class of tenants who pay their rent weekly it is customary before letting them a house to ask them to produce their rent book that they have had from their previous landlord, in order to ascertain whether they are in the habit of paying their rent regularly or otherwise. Should the prospective tenant be backward in his payments, it is not unusual for him to throw out present as his own the rent book of a friend who is more prompt in paying his rent. This is a trick that is played almost every day.

I remember one old lady who realized a tidy little sum by hiring out her rent book. As she paid her landlord punctually every week, her book was of course invaluable to the defaulting tenant in search of a house. I should think that the book was presented at our office some scores of times before the fraud was detected. What led to the discovery was the frequent recurrence in our defaulters' list of the same name.

An Unremunerative Ending.

A few years ago a young man living not over a thousand miles from Hartford fell head over heels in love with a young lady whom he had been introduced to at the home of a friend. He wrote her several notes and received no answer, and finally becoming desperate wrote that she would find his cold corpse on her front porch if she did not send him "one little line." She wrote and the answer she received was this:

Dear Sir — I see the stamp that was over envelope between it and inserted yesterday.

Her answer:

Dear Sir: The stamp you saw was put on the envelope by my aegis machine.

—Hartford Post.

Investigations of railroads lead to the conclusion that some of the large drops must be more or less hollow, as they fall when striking to wet the whole surface flattened gutta-ble drop.

STRANGE WAYS OF THE OSTRICH.

The Hens of the Black Lay in the Same Nest and the Male Hatches the Eggs.

The ostrich has many strange ways, and I was particularly interested in studying them. They go in flocks of three or four females and one male about their mating time, and for several weeks before laying their nests the hens drop their eggs all about the pastures. These are called inside (possessed "nesting") eggs, and are much more delicate in flavor than the eggs laid in the nests. They have a thinner shell and when fresh laid are of a beautiful golden color. We cooked them by roasting them before the fire. We would first break a hole in the shell and of the egg large enough to insert a teaspoon.

The egg would be set up among some hot ashes, a pinch of salt and pepper put into it, and the contents kept stirred with a stick, so that it would cook alike. The flavor is excellent, and one egg would satisfy a very hungry man. As soon as the ostriches decide upon a suitable place for a nest the male bird scratches away the grass and slightly hollows the ground for a space of about two feet in diameter. All the hens of the flock lay in the same nest until there are from twenty-five to thirty-five eggs laid. The male bird then takes possession of this on the eggs until they are hatched. As soon as the hens have laid the nest the old fellow leads them away to feed on fine and small insects, and everything of lovely until he makes another nest bird with a brood.

As soon as the old birds see each other they make a peculiar booming call, and every little ostrich disappears in the grass. The old ones then approach each other and engage in a most deadly conflict. They fight until one or the other is killed or runs away. The remaining one will then utter another peculiar sound and both broods will spring up from their hiding places and follow the victor, who struts off as proud as a peacock. I have seen old male ostriches with three broods, each of a different size, two of which they had captured.

They become very tame in captivity, but are a perfect nuisance about a place, as you cannot keep them out of the buildings and they will gobble up anything they can swallow. One of them cleaned out a workbench one day, swallowed spools of cotton, emery bag and thimble, ending his repast by eating up a bowl of marmore we had on the table to use in line of butter. They will stalk around the grounds in the most stately manner, then suddenly commence dancing in the most comical way, ravishing all over themselves and running around like mad. They will stop this foolishness as suddenly as they commenced it and walk off as demurely as if they were going to a funeral.—Forest and Stream.

Ancient and Modern Dress.

I think the ancients exercised vastly more judgment in the matter of wearing apparel than do the moderns. Compare the dress of a Roman senator with the haberdashery of a member of the American house of millionaires. The former was graceful, comfortable, picturesque, the latter is the reverse of all these. We do not realize how incongruous and inartistic the modern male costume is, because we have become accustomed to it. A high silk hat, spiketailed coat and baggy trousers constitute our ideal of fashion attire, yet it is sufficient to give an artist an acute attack of thermolignrabs. Sculptors avoid it as they would the plague; artists frequently resort to gross anachronisms to get around a combination which makes a man resemble nothing created by the Almighty, and distinguishes of a single line of beauty.

We are continually lecturing the ladies on the subject of dress, yet they have preserved some of the beauties and comforts of ancient costume, while we have sacrificed both all and are as proud of it as an Indian squaw who has traded a buffalo robe for a second-hand pair of soldier pants. Even the extravagance of male costume during the Middle Ages were infinitely preferable to the stupid garments of the present. We will probably never return to the togs of the Romans or the gaudy colors of the crusaders, but the baggy trousers, the spiketailed coat and the idiotic "plug" cannot last forever. Sunspondin will yet lead us out of the wilderness of absurdities into which we have fallen.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Story of Boom.

The manufacture of anecdotes about dogs was a constant source of amusement to Captain Marryat. As the creator of "Frederyyon" Marryat showed marked ability. How much that great practical joker, Hook, helped Marryat as collaborator in dog yarns is not known. The most ingenious one is about Boom, represented to be a Newfoundland dog. Boom's master made a bet that, if a half dozen silk hats were put down on the floor, his dog would bring them all to him in his mouth at once. The wager was accepted and six high hats were put on the floor. Boom was introduced and requested "to fetch 'em."

Tid Boom hesitated. Perhaps for a moment he felt that the noble animal was only thoughtful, not embarrassed. Extending the circumference of the many hats, Boom selected at once the largest, then the next in size and slipped the smaller into the larger hat and so on until he had successfully nested the whole six in the one large hat. Then taking the entire hat package neatly by the rim, he brought the six hats to his master. The story, when Marryat saw it copied all over England, gave him the honest delight, not, for aught that is known, it still floats around in the columns of French or German newspapers.—New York Times.

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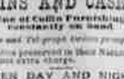

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