

# MISTRESS MARGERY'S DESCENDANT

## The Object of a Monument—A Discourse on Nomads and other Topics.

BENTFORD, Ont., July 31.—A little less than two hundred years ago, in Salem, Mass., one Mistress Margery Brouse—it having been proven to the satisfaction of a company of her close-cropped Puritan country folk that she possessed an evil eye, a wart on her nose, a black cat and the bad taste to prefer her own society—was hanged by the neck until she was as dead as a witch could be. All this while the sun shone and the birds sang and people married and were given in marriage and garnered in their corn and went to church as they do now. This month the magnanimous descendants of the same Mistress Margery, of uncanny memory, meeting together at the scene of her taking-off, unveil a monument in her honor. I am just inquisitive enough to wonder why. What do you suppose inspires this act of tardy reparation in the bosom of the Brouse family and the ramifications thereof? Hardly the perpetuation of the old lady's virtues, for history doesn't recount any that would counterbalance the wart. Surely not to impose their great great-grandmamma upon the public in martyr guise. The ancient dame died neither for her convictions nor her cat, but simply because she couldn't help herself—not a very heroic pose for the contemplation of future generations. So far as we can discover she was neither a saint nor a martyr, but simply a victim to convictions opposed to old women of unsocial habits, taciturn dispositions and badly regulated feline tendencies. It is by way of testifying to the public generally that whatever popular opinion may be, as for the Brouses and their connections, they consider this questionable ancestress of theirs to have been a proper and respectable old lady, and no witch whatever, and are willing boldly to face the consequences of this undaunted statement. Rather an equivocal compliment to the present enlightenment of Massachusetts. I don't incline to any of these theories myself. It seems to me that the mere fact of having a witch in the family is enough to justify calling public attention to it. It is quite a unique distinction in its way, entirely original and creditable and convenient as the undoubted source of any little eccentricities existent in the present generation. There's something delightfully gruesome and interesting about a genuine gallops in the family annals, and a liberated ancestress soaring away from it on the traditional broomstick with vengeance in her eye. On a winter's night, when the wind is howling and the rest of the elements in a corresponding state of amiability, it must almost amount to a sensation. I don't wonder that the Brouses are uplifted over their witch. Few, however, will look upon this late-coming tribute and think of the wretched old woman who went shrinkingly to her death two hundred years ago, with a dull sense of man's inexorable cruelty and pitiful inarticulate outcries of innocence. It will be a far more effective memorial of the blind superstition that covered the land like a pall and inspired the blind terror that sent her there. What monument, I wonder, will commemorate our stupidities and inhumanities two hundred years from now!

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, with an eye to instruction of the masses, amiably recommends that at a forthcoming exhibition miniature American Indian and Esquimaux villages be constructed and "real painted braves, squaws, and papooses be imported to give an air of picturesque reality to the representation." Giving the *Herald* due credit for philanthropic motives and an enterprising spirit, we must respectfully beg that it will desist from thus thoughtlessly adding fuel to the inappeasable flame of British curiosity about the North American Indian. Introduced to the intelligent Briton by Mr. Cooper some years ago, paint, feathers and all, he has ever since been impressed upon that usually unimaginative being as forming a predominant and highly interesting element in American society. A wigwag, invariably pitched in the foreground of the American landscapes adorning the said intelligent Briton's walls, he naturally looks around for it when he arrives, and is usually disappointed at not finding it prominent to any extent as an architectural feature. He doesn't seem able to divest himself of the idea that the noble red man still occasionally whoops along our highways with his old irrepressibility, and that scalps are to be had for a shilling or two as curios in some localities. No, it is not desirable further to impress the British mind with the North American Indian. Besides, he has been sufficiently conspicuous lately. We really can't have the whole front of our admirable civilization obscured any longer by this flying nomad with his chronic appetite and his unsavory ideas of housekeeping. We would like to direct public attention to a few other features—not quite so picturesque, perhaps, but infinitely more popular. Put the collegiate institute in your American village, and the telephone and block pavements, and stores with plate-glass windows and elevators—no, by the way, not elevators—the British public wouldn't understand you; with true insular directness and economy of syllables they say "lift" over there, I believe. The Englishwoman who told me that, also informed me that upon one occasion she was requested by her American hostess to have some "insertion" with her turkey. She was relieved to find that it was only American for what she had all her life, in honest English parlance, called "stuffing." But that has nothing to do with the North American Indian, whose feminine counterpart is just now making her unaccustomed appearance at the back doors of our land in quite idyllic guise. The noisy cries of "strawberries! fine fresh strawberries! strawb'r'y, ripe!" have been replaced by these silent vendors, whose wares lie in red, juicy masses under the broad green leaves of their wooden pails. I'm sorry for you if you have to buy your raspberries from the fruiterer in little quart boxes, and miss the poetry of bargaining with one of these brown-skinned, liquid-eyed, many-over-skirted berry peddlers, who, smiling and silent, proffers her leaf-hidden burden, turning away still smiling and silent if you don't want it. "How much?"

"Ten shillin'." And she stands there in her red petticoat and composedly fans herself with her broad straw hat, still lucently smiling and unexpectant. Ten shillings for the long day's picking in the bird-haunted wood solitudes, where the sunlight filters down upon the bracken, and great gray branches send flickering shadows across mossy logs, and the heavy-headed raspberry sprays flash a shining baptism of dew upon the brown hand that rifles them. At this juncture Theophilus, known by the infelicity of his inspirations, suggests that the brown hand probably needed the baptism, but of this it is not appetizing to discourse at present. The "ten shillin'" are yours, my dusky matron, mine is the feast you robbed great Pan of, and a new kerchief will shortly add its rainbow tints to the feminine fascinations of the Reserve.

I have it from the *London Graphic*, a journal not given to alarmingly humorous statement, that the next "World's Exposition"—a patriotic Greek having supplied the necessary funds—is to be held in 1887 at Athens. Shades of the mighty dead! What a Doric row there will be when news of this final desecration reaches your Plutonian retreats! Why didn't you save your money, O most unpatriotic Greek, for the defense of your ancient town against such an incursion by these barbarians of a later day? The brazen tongue of the modern advertisement where Athenian oratory fell! The touring bridal couple and the American peanut-shell wandering amatively in the classic solitudes where Socrates and Aspasia held immortal discourse! An electric railway around the Acropolis! Plunk lemonade from the waters of the Ilyssus! And—tell it not in Gath, publish it not unto Pericles!—a roller coaster on the site of the Parthenon! I beg to move that a committee be appointed, with Mr. Ruskin in the chair, to reason with this patriotic Greek.

GARTH GRAFTON.