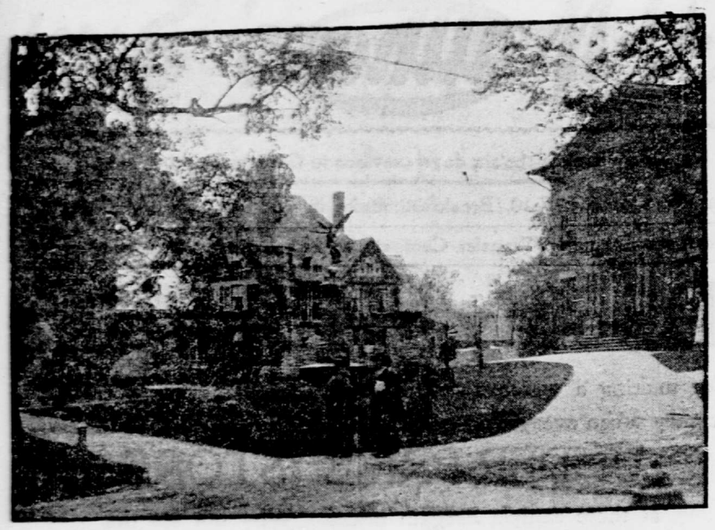
INDIAN LEGENDS, SOME OF THRILLING INTEREST, LINGER ABOUT GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS., IN PROFUSION.



SITE OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE AND JAIL, GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS.

LEGENDS OF BERKSHIRES

TOLD BY AN ELDERLY RESIDENT OF GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS.

AN INDIAN SLAUGHTER IN THE KING PHILIP WAR—RESISTANCE TO BRITISH RULE—INCIDENTS OF SHAYS'S REBELLION.

"I hope you won't make the mistakes some newspaper people have made if you write up this place," said an elderly man in the town of Great Barrington, Mass., a short time ago, when he was asked if he could remember any legends of the place. From the second story window where he sat one could look down into the main street. Across the way were some of the new buildings which have grown up from the ruins of old structures destroyed by fire. The street presented a busy scene. Great Barrington is a centre for a large circle of country in Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. From the purple domes which bound the plain in which the town lies on the east and west, and from the hills which lie beyond, daily come the stages and the farmers' teams for the mail and supplies and with produce. Down in the wide street, picking its way along the lane of farmers' wagons which fringed the sidewalks was the wagon of a tin pedler covered with shining pans. Along either side, suggestive of the ornaments on a hearse in their arrangement, were rows of brooms. Behind followed a farmer's wagon, the driver a specimen of the type of Yankee described by the lines of the political jingle which used to be sung to the tune of "Yankee Doodle":

"Do your biggest; we don't care,
We can lick you handy."

Although his horses were not of the spirit of those which drew Jehu into battle, he drove after the manner of that Hebrew chieftain standing behind the seat of his wagon. He turned up to the sidewalk and dismounted from his chariot. Then passed before the window the highly polished vehicle of a wealthy New-Yorker, who, perchance, had just returned from a ride through the country, then decked in its autumn foliage.

The old man turned in his chair and continued: "It has been written up so many times and so many have got things wrong that I am tired of telling about the town. Why, one fellow told a cock-and-bull story about that bowlder back of the town hall on which one of the selectmen had painted the date of the incorporation of the town—1761. He described it as one of the foundations of the jail, which stood about where the Episcopal church now stands. The only thing of which that bowlder is a relic is the ice age. It was evidently deposited there by a glacier. He was about as near right as the wag who said that the figures represented the average collections taken up at the Episcopal church. The wag divided the figures in half with a period. Well, what can I tell you?" he asked as he settled back ready to tell what he knew. "I am afraid I haven't much of what you want.

"Were there any Indian fights near here? I can't prove it, but I have every reason to believe that there was a battle fought here three or four days after King Philip was killed. Some have asserted that it took place at Stockbridge, and others say that the battle was fought in the upper part of Sharon, Corn. I think it occurred on the west bank of the river here in the village, a few rods above the bridge, where the Indian path crossed the stream. A few years ago one could see the indentation in the bank where the old wagon road, which followed the Indian path closely, left the water.

"Sometime about the middle of August, 1676, when the whites had broken the spirit of the Indians in Massachusetts, and possibly on the day that King Philip was killed, a band of fugitive Indians numbering about 200 filed along the trail on their way to the Hudson. They crossed the Housatonic at the old fordway and encamped on the west bank, unaware that their proximity had been discovered by the whites and that a body of Connecticut soldiers and Indians, in command of Major Talcot, was in pursuit. Major Talcot was at Westfield when he made the discovery that this body of Indians was passing through the neighborhood. He immediately took the trail and pressed on to overtake them. So far as I am able to fix it, the whites reached the east bank of the Housatonic on the night of August 14. At least, it was on the third day after learning of the proximity of the fleeing Indians. Night had fallen, and in the darkness Major Talcot could see across the rippling stream and through the leaves on the further bank the flickering flames of the camp fires of the Indians, who appeared to have taken no precautions to prevent discovery. So far as Major Talcot could judge, they were unaware of his pursuit and his arrival on the opposite bank. The river was so narrow at that point that he could hear the grunts of the Indians. It was strange that the redskins did not hear Major Talcot's men or have any scouts out. Apparently they were off their guard.

"Major Talcot decided to postpone the fight until morning. He drew his men back, and in the stillness of the night they lay down on their arms. Major Talcot cautioned them to make no sound. I don't think that cautionary order was necessary after the bloody experiences of the war. In the deep silence of the night, broken only by the murmur of the river as it flowed southward over the stones, which seemed a part of the silence, they slept until early dawn. Before the east had reddened Major Talcot and his men were awake and preparing for the attack. It was decided to divide the force into two parts, one of which was to go down stream for some distance, then wade across to the side on which the Indians were encamped and, marching up, attack their front. At the same time the second body, under Major Talcot, was to approach the river along the Indian path, and as soon as the first body attacked was to fire across into the rear of the Indians.

"The Indians had slept soundly, unaware of the approaching battle. There were no signs in the camp that they were in haste to leave the river with its supply of food. The night being warm, they had taken no pains to keep the fires blazing and had thrown themselves down upon the grass to sleep. Like logs they lay, without thought for the morrow. With one exception, they were all asleep when Major Talcot and his men rose from their grassy beds. The exception was a rawboned Indian, who was getting out his fishing spear. Having secured it he picked his way between his sleeping companions and started down stream on the west bank in the direction taken by the whites on the other side. He was going to a spot where he had discovered that fish were to be speared easily, to get a breakfast. Through the forest he took his way with almost inaudible footsteps. There was little thought of danger, for were not he and his companions in an unsettled region and many miles to the west of the scene of conflict? His feeling of confidence, however, did not entirely overcome his habit of caution. His keen ear detected the echo of a crash in the undergrowth. The crash was followed by the appearance of a company of white men, with their dreaded guns, in the glade, the edge of which he had reached.

"The Indian yelled a warning to his companions. His shout cost him dear, for in an instant a spit of flame and smoke half hid the group of whites and the leaves of the bushes beside him were splashed with his blood. His cry was the last articulate sound he uttered.

"The sound of the shot echoed through the woods and reached the ears of both the Indians and of Major Talcot and his men. To the Indians it declared the proximity of the white men in unknown numbers. To Major Talcot it had the meaning of a signal for which he had been listening. In an instant the crash of many guns rang through the woods and a cloud of white smoke rolled out from the bushes over the water.

"The battle, if it could be called a battle, was a brief one. I should not style it a battle. It was a rout. The Indians were hardly awake when the volley was fired. At the sound of the guns those who had not been hit ran toward the west and escaped, for the first division, which Major Talcot thought was in position to the westward, had not reached its station, and consequently could not intercept the flying Indians. While not so thorough as Major Talcot had intended it to be, it was nevertheless a blow to the red men. Wading through the stream, his men caught twenty of the Indians, who were wandering aimlessly about rubbing the sleep from their eyes. Besides these, he found twenty-five dead and wounded lying on the ground. The Indians did not cease their flight until they had put themselves on the far side of the Hudson River."

The elderly man, who had gradually leaned forward as the tale advanced, tapping the palm of his left hand with the forefinger of his right by way of emphasizing its points, sat back again in his chair and waited for the next suggestion—now in the mood for story telling.

"I notice that there is a stone set up at the corner of the square about the town hall, on which is an inscription which states that the first open resistance to British rule occurred here on August 16, 1774; what does that refer to?"

"That is not a long story," the old man went on. "On July 6, 1774, a convention was held at Stockbridge, at which the trouble between Great Britain and the colonies was discussed and strong resolutions adopted. The next session of the county court was to be held here on August 16, of that year, in the courthouse which stood on that corner. The other county courts came a little later.

"On the day that the court was to open a large number of citizens assembled around the courthouse. They came from all parts of the county, and there were from three to five hundred from Litchfield County, Conn. Entering the courthouse, they filled it to overflowing, and effectually prevented the judges from either occupying the building or transacting any business. The Sheriff tried to make a passage through the crowd for the magistrates, but was unable to do so. The people would not recognize the authority of the court, and insisted that the judges should leave the town, which they decided was the better part of wisdom. One of the judges, a prominent Tory of Great Barrington, was taken by the Connecticut men to Litchfield County and thrown into prison. The court made no more effort to sit, and never again did a king's court sit in the county."

The story teller did not stop after finishing this story, but proceeded without further hint.

"One of the battles of Shays's rebellion took place near Great Barrington," he continued, "and a few incidents connected with that event have come down. The Shays men marched down here from Stockbridge, where they had spent the previous night in pillaging houses and enjoying a carousal, in an exhilarated frame of mind. The news of their approach had preceded them, and when they reached the town nearly all the men of the village had gone to Sheffield to get reinforcements. It was a bitter cold morning. The shoes of the sleighs squeaked in the snow, it was so cold. The Shays men halted in the village for a short time, and a party of them visited the jail, which stood where the Episcopal church now stands, to release the prisoners, many of whom were there because of their inability to pay their debts. They found only the wife of the jailer at home, as the jailer had gone to Sheffield with the other men. The jailer's wife was a bright, black eyed little woman, with a sense of humor. At the request of the leader of the party she produced the keys, and herself unlocked the door. As the men crossed the threshhold she saucily sang an old hymn, which ran:

"'Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound!
Mine ears attend the cry.
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie.'

"Concluding the verse, she added the comment, 'For we will have you all in here before morning.'

"Her prophecy proved a correct one. That night after the battle many of the rebels were incarcerated in the shaky old jail.

"The insurgents, after they had been locked up that evening, had an experience which was entirely unexpected.

"A large body of them had visited the house of General Thomas Ives at about 11 o'clock in the morning, seeking for arms and such plunder as was to be found. There they had found the wife of the general in bed, sick, and a middle aged spinster of the village whom General Ives had left in charge of the house when he drove off to Sheffield in his sleigh with a load of men. General Ives had directed the spinster to treat the insurgents civilly, if any should chance to pay the house a visit, as he had no doubt they would.

"'Follow them wherever they go,' said he. 'Tell them of the illness of my wife and ask them to make no unnecessary disturbance, and find out the names of as many of them as you can.' The housekeeper performed her mission faithfully. Wherever they went—and they went practically all over the house in their search for arms—she followed them. She told them of the illness of the general's wife and obtained the names of some of the men. When they discovered an enormous hair covered trunk in which General Ives kept his papers she persuaded them not to break it open, declaring that it contained no arms. As a matter of fact, General Ives had sent a sixteen-year-old boy on horseback with a grainsack containing his most important papers to another house to hide them in its garret. The insurgents would not be likely to look in another house for his papers, no thought. Measuring the trunk with their weapons, and finding it too short to contain guns, they decided that she was telling the truth and left it intact. Having consumed the contents of the pantry and washed the eatables down with generous draughts of cider, which a boy at their command brought up to them by the pailful from the depths of the cellar, they left without subjecting the two women to any insolence or further inconvenience.

"That night, after the defeat of the Shays men, General Ives visited the jail. Standing on tiptoe and looking over the heads of the crowd as well as he could, he asked: 'Were any of you at my house to-day?'

"'Certainly not,' replied one of the leaders, in whose hat was still to be seen a sprig of hemlock, the badge of the Shays men. A chorus of denials followed this assertion.

"'Now, my friends,' replied the general, 'I know that some of you were at my house, for I happen to have the names of several of my callers. You were in too great a hurry to deny your participation in that visit. I came here to thank you for the small amount of disorder you caused and the consideration you showed to the women folks. I wished to show my appreciation by treating you.'

"'Well, general,' solemnly replied the spokesman, 'I must confess that, in fact, all of us were at your house.'

"'That being the case, I think I shall be obliged to treat all of you,' responded the general, with a twinkle in his eye. He was as good as his word.

"There is an interesting old red house part way down the hill to the river," went on the old man, "which played a part in Shays's Rebellion. It stood on Main-st. at the time. The occupant of the house, a Dr. William Whiting, was of the opinion that it was saved from demolition by the fury of the insurgents only by an essay which he had written. This was several months before the battle which proved so disastrous to the rebellion. It was in September of the previous year. The rebels had prevented the sitting of the county courts at Northampton and at Worcester, and came to Great Barrington to interfere with the session of the Court of Common Pleas here. The crowd began to assemble the evening before the court was to open its session. All night and the next day the streets were filled with armed men. There must have been as many as two thousand of them. The militia, which had been ordered out to protect the court, was no match for the crowd in point of numbers, and so it made no effort to attack the mob which surrounded the courthouse and openly threatened to demolish it if any attempt was made to hold a session of the court. The judges, of whom the owner of the red house was one, met at a private house and adjourned without naming a day for convening again.

"Whether he was correct or not, Dr. Whiting believes that he was particularly obnoxious to the rebels. At any rate, they pounced upon him with fixed bayonets, displaying a fury terrifying to the doctor, as he was on his way to his home from the house where the judges had held the private session of the court. He was conducted to his house, where he, together with some of his colleagues, was compelled to sign an agreement not to hold court again until the constitution of the Commonwealth was revised or a new one adopted. As the paper was presented to him he could perceive through the open window that a large crowd had assembled about the house, and could hear shouts of 'Burn the house down!' 'Smoke him out!' 'He's one of the judges!' etc. For the moment it seemed as if the house would be destroyed.

"A few days previous to this occurrence Dr. Whiting, who rather enjoyed the promulgation of political and religious pamphlets, had prepared, apparently for publication, an essay over the signature of 'Gracchus,' entitled 'Some Brief Remarks Upon the Present State of Affairs,' in which he reviewed and commented upon the grievances of the people. An acquaintance of Dr. Whiting, who was with him in the house at the time, and was alarmed at the doctor's situation and fearful that the mob outside would carry out the threat, suggested that he read the essay, with the contents of which he was familiar, to the people. 'This may appease their fury against you,' he urged. The doctor got out the manuscript of his essay and handed it to his friend. The latter then approached the window, holding it in his hand so that it could be seen by the mob. Those outside saw him coming to the window with the paper, which looked as if it might be a proclamation of some sort, and there were shouts of 'Keep still back there—he's got something to read!' The reader raised his hand for silence when he reached the window. The crowd pushed forward and became still. It was explained that the essay had been written several days before this occurrence. The reading was heard throughout in silence. Then some one in the crowd remarked: 'Why, he thinks as we do; he's all right.' This appeared to be the opinion of all, for the crowd soon melted away and left the doctor in peace.

"Should you chance to have time to go out toward Bung Hill, you could see a rude cavern formed of huge masses of rock which have fallen together. It is on a hillside, up among the trees, and is called Belcher's Cave. There is a legend connected with it. It is said that a man named 'Gil' Belcher about one hundred years ago used it as a mint. I think it would be correct to style it a mint, as he is supposed to have made counterfeit money there. There was such a man, for an old deed shows that 'Gil' Belcher, of Hebron, Conn., goldsmith,' bought some land at the forks of the roads leading to Stockbridge and Three Mile Hill in 1765. Here, it is said, he carried on his trade for several years, doing such tinkering and mending as the people of the neighborhood desired done. Two or three years before the Revolution he got into trouble. Evidently he did not spend all his time mending the odd pieces of silverware and tinware. He spent a month of the haying season in jail. He was released, and then again arrested three months later, with two or three other men, all of whom were accused of counterfeiting money. Apparently they used the cave as a basis for their business, passing off the spurious money in New-York State, which is only a few miles away, over that range of hills on the west. The day after their arrest they were taken to New-Canaan, N. Y., probably for trial.

"I must tell one or two stories about a man who was a well known character in his day, and looked upon as somewhat of an oracle, Major William King, and by that time I think you will have all the stories you want. Major King was a tall man, being about six feet four, with large limbs and features. His legs were long, his hands large, his face long, with a prominent forehead, underneath which small, keen eyes peered out. His general massiveness of frame and feature and his keen insight gave him the reputation of being a profound man. Living in the latter half of the last century, he was looked upon as a leader, owing to his sound judgment and common sense. Although not a member of the bar he was permitted to practise in the lower courts, and not a few were the cases which he won. His ready wit, coupled with his marked physical and mental peculiarities, attracted attention to him wherever he was seen or heard. He was an officer in both the French and Indian and the Revolutionary wars.

"A story is told of the way in which he won a case which had an indirect connection with Shays's Rebellion. At that time there was a vast amount of ill feeling between neighbors. The rebellion was a civil war in miniature. About this time a horse belonging to a supporter of the government was shot by a neighbor who was a sympathizer with Shays. A suit for damages was begun by the former against the latter. The latter had secured the services of Major King to defend him. The Shays man was known to be guilty, but there was difficulty in proving it. When the case came to trial it was shown that the Shays man, at the time the horse was killed, had been seen within half a mile of the lot in which the horse was pastured, carrying a gun, and hurrahing lustily for Shays. This was not conclusive evidence, but the prosecutor laid great stress upon it and made a labored argument based thereon.

"Major King, when the prosecution had finished, rose and laconically addressed the court in these words: 'May it please Your Honor: The question is, whether or not hurrahing for Shays will kill a horse at half a mile.' Then he sat down. The defendant was acquitted.

"It is probable that Major King and his wife did not live amicably together. At any rate, one fine morning Mrs. King said she was going to make a visit at her father's house, which was in the southern part of the town, and that she would not return until her husband came for her. This may have been said in jest or it may not, but whether it was or not Major King did not go for her immediately. In fact, days passed into weeks and the weeks into years. Neither of them communicated with each other and more than a score of years had passed before Major King reached the conclusion that his wife had visited at her father's house long enough. One morning, having nothing of especial importance to do, he saddled his horse, and attaching a dusty and long unused pillion behind, rode off to the house of his father-in-law. Dismounting at the door he raised the knocker and let it fall. His wife answered his knock for admission. It is possible that like himself she was tired of living alone, and seeing the tall angular figure of her husband, aged since she saw him last, had intentionally answered his rap. He was the first to speak.

"'Good morning, Rachel.'

"'Good morning, Major King.'

"'Rachel, have you visited long enough?'

"I imagine that when she answered 'Yes,' as she did answer, with a merry twinkle in her eye, there was a sense of undefined happiness in her heart.

"'Are you ready to go home?'

"'Have you come after me?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then I will go with you.' And he, having assisted her to the pillion behind him, the two, now well along in years, jogged away toward home with the spirits of a bride and bridegroom."

A RELIC OF THE SHAYS REBELLION AT GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS.

"There is an interesting old red house, part way down the hill to the river."

SPOT WHERE INDIAN FIGHT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE OCCURRED, GREAT BARRINGTON, MASS.

"I think it occurred on the bank of the river here in the village. . . . where the old Indian path crossed the stream."

SCHEMES TO DEFRAUD INSURANCE COMPANIES.

DRAMATIC AND GREWSOME STORIES OF CONSPIRACIES TO RECOVER LIFE INSURANCE FUNDS—THE CRIMINALS USUALLY CAUGHT.

The schemes which a gang of swindlers have been working in Mexico and Texas to defraud Northern life insurance companies serve to recall many dramatic and some extremely grewsome stories of former criminal conspiracies in the same direction, most of which are contained in legal records. These schemes are almost always characterized by a most brutal and selfish disregard of the lives, sufferings and losses of others.

In this regard perhaps few, if any, of the conspiracies of former times exceed that of Dr. Henry C. W. Meyer, who was convicted of murder in the second degree before Recorder Frederick Smyth in this city in May, 1894.

Many persons must recall the horrible testimony adduced upon that trial, and the impatience with which a verdict of murder in the second degree, instead of a verdict which would carry capital punishment with it, was received.

Meyer's counsel was pleased with this verdict, and considered it a practical victory, which it was, in fact. Meyer's trial was first begun before Judge Barrett, in the Court of Oyer and Terminer, in December, 1893, and while the trial was in progress one of the jurors became insane, which caused a mistrial. The second trial was held in April and May, 1894, resulting in a verdict of murder in the second degree, from which no appeal was taken.

The evidence brought out on the trial of Meyer was of the most horrible description, and indicated that he had killed a number of persons for the purpose of securing the insurance money, poison being usually the agency employed. Meyer and his wife worked together, the particular scheme which they employed in New-York being to insure the life of a confederate, and after his death Mrs. Meyer would appear in the role of the "weeping widow" to collect the insurance money.

The cold blooded brutality of Meyer in this case reveals the character of the man. He entered into a plan with a man named Ludwig Brandt and secured insurance on his life under the name of Gustav Heinrich Maria Joseph Baum in the sum of $8,500, in four companies. The beneficiary was Meyer's wife, who went through the form of a marriage ceremony with Brandt, alias Baum, before a Chicago clergyman, passing herself off as a niece of Meyer. The scheme which Meyer arranged with Brandt was that he was to give Brandt some medicine which would make him sick, and then he would call in a local physician. After he had been ill some days, Meyer told Brandt that he (Brandt) could disappear, and Meyer would procure a dead body and pass it off on the insurance company as Brandt's body, under the name of Baum, and then they would collect the insurance money and divide it.

Brandt took the medicine, became ill, and a local physician was called in several times. But all this time Meyer, instead of giving Brandt a harmless medicine, from the effects of which he would recover, was slowly filling Brandt with poison, and Brandt soon died from the effects of the drug. Meyer, from his long experience in such cases, succeeded in so deceiving the local physician that he gave a certificate of death from some cause other than the real one, and the way seemed clear for the collection of the insurance money by the bogus widow.

She had collected $3,000 from the Washington Life Insurance Company, and a check for $1,000 was ready to be delivered to her by the Ætna Life Insurance Company, but when the guilty pair went to collect the insurance of $3,500 in the Mutual Life Insurance Company some questions which were asked led to a suspicion that all was not right, and the evasive answers of the bogus widow led to an investigation, which disclosed the whole plot. As soon as Meyer and his wife discovered that they were suspected, they separated and disappeared.

The body of Brandt was exhumed, and was discovered to be full of poison, and after several months Meyer was arrested in Detroit, through the efforts of the insurance companies, and brought to New-York for trial. He had been in prison once or twice before at least, and probably the number of his crimes will never be known unless he himself reveals them. It appeared on trial, however, that he had killed at least seven persons, and three others had escaped after he had begun poisoning them by slow degrees.

An older case that terminated dramatically without any of the unpleasant details of most fraudulent insurance schemes is recorded in the courts of Beloit, Wis. In the fall of 1865 John H. Sargeant secured a policy of insurance in an accident insurance company, in the sum of $3,000, and on the same day he was married by a minister in Beloit to a woman who came with him to Beloit, the clergyman's wife and daughter and a woman friend in the house acting as witnesses to the ceremony. Sargeant secured the policy directly after his marriage, and had it made payable to his wife.

The newly wedded couple left town and were not heard from again until about a month later, when the people in the village were informed by Henry J. Allen, Samuel A. Corwin and Emanuel Hill that Sargeant had been skating with Corwin on the Pecatonica River in the afternoon of December 15, and had fallen through an airhole and disappeared under the ice. Search was made for the body, and continued for two or three days by a large number of citizens, but no trace of the body could be found. The proofs of the death of Sargeant were sent by the widow to the insurance company, and the $3,000 insurance money was claimed. The insurance agents made an investigation and came to the conclusion that Sargeant had been really drowned and that there was nothing wrong about the case.

One of the company's inspectors, however, learned that all of the parties interested were of rather bad reputation, and decided to contest the payment of the money in order to gain time for further investigation. Several circumstances led to the conclusion that Henry J. Allen, the one who had given the first news of the death of Sargeant, was, in fact, Sargeant. In the first place, some of Allen's handwriting was secured, and it was found to correspond exactly with that of the signature of Sargeant on the hotel register at the hotel where he remained when he came to Beloit first. The signature of Sargeant, who gave his name as J. H. Sargeant, appeared on the hotel register as H. J. Sargeant, instead of J. H. The initials of Allen were H. J., not J. H. This, coupled with the belief that it would be almost impossible for a man to make a mistake in signing his own name, led to further investigation.

Sargeant had also pawned a watch with the agent of the insurance company, to pay the premium, and although this watch had been sold by the agent, it was looked up and secured, and upon inquiry it was found that Henry J. Allen had left the same watch to be repaired in Rockford, not long prior to the transaction in question. The minister who married Sargeant and also the witnesses to the ceremony testified that Allen was the man who appeared before them, and was married to the plaintiff in the suit, the alleged widow.

On the other side, the widow testified absolutely that Allen was not her husband, that her husband was drowned, as had been testified to by the other three men. She produced a photograph of a man not at all of the appearance of Allen, whom she said was her husband, and the other three men testified that the picture was a correct likeness of Sargeant, who had been drowned, and that they had each known him for some time. While, therefore, the testimony seemed convincing that Allen was the man who secured the policy and that a fraud was committed upon the company, the testimony submitted by the plaintiff was so strong and unequivocal that it looked as if the jury would be called upon to determine who was telling the truth, when an incident happened which made further proceedings unnecessary.

As soon as the alleged widow produced the photograph, note was taken by the defendant's counsel of the photographer who made the picture, and a man was immediately dispatched to a town some distance away to find out what he could about the photograph. On the fourth day of the trial the photographer had been carried many miles across country at a considerable expense as a witness, and the photograph which had been introduced in evidence was shown to him. He said that he was a photographer by occupation, and he had made that identical picture. In proof of this he produced the negative from which the print had been made. He was asked of whom it was a photograph, and he replied that it was a picture of a man named James Clure, a tailor, who, he said, lived in Batavia, Ill. He further said that Clure was still living, and that he had seen him nearly every day for a long time, and that the last time he had seen him was about an hour previous.

This testimony produced a profound sensation in court, and a moment later the name of James Clure was called as a witness. He had theretofore been sitting on a retired seat in the room. He came forward, and it was easily seen that he was the unmistakable original of the photograph which had been introduced in evidence by the widow as a picture of her deceased husband, Sargeant. Clure testified that it was his photograph; that it had been taken by the photographer who had been on the witness stand a few moments before; that he had never been the husband of the plaintiff; that he had never been called by the name of J. H. Sargeant, and that he had never been drowned in the Pecatonica River. This, of course, closed the case, and the defendant's counsel withdrew in disgust, and Allen and the "Widow Sargeant" were subsequently indicted for conspiracy.

Horrible details were brought out on the trial of Dr. Hermann W. Mudgett, otherwise known as H. H. Holmes, in Philadelphia, in the fall of 1895. He was convicted of the murder of Benjamin F. Pietzel and the three children of the murdered man. His first crime, the killing of the father, was perpetrated for the purpose of securing the payment of a policy of insurance of $10,000, and Holmes actually secured this money so that the insurance people never recovered it. Holmes killed the three children to prevent Pietzel's wife from discovering that her husband was dead. In this case Holmes conspired with Pietzel to defraud insurance companies by having Pietzel disappear after the policy was issued. Holmes was to furnish proof of his death. Holmes, however, appears not to have been satisfied with this arrangement. He actually murdered Pietzel in a hotel in Philadelphia.

The story of the detection of Holmes is quite remarkable. The body of Pietzel was found in the room under circumstances which indicated that there had been an explosion, and the coroner, upon holding an inquest, reported that a man named B. F. Perry had been killed by an explosion of gas, and, as no one appeared to claim the body, it was buried in the potter's field. Not long after this the insurance company received a letter from the wife of Pietzel, saying that she had been informed or was led to believe that the man said to have been B. F. Perry, and who lost his life in Philadelphia by an explosion, was her husband, Benjamin F. Pietzel.

The company began to investigate, and through the agent in Chicago learned that a man named H. H. Holmes, who had formerly occupied an office, or part of an office, which Pietzel had also occupied in Chicago, was the only one who could give a detailed description of Pietzel's personal appearance. The agent found the residence of Holmes, and there saw a woman supposed to be the wife of Holmes, who said that Holmes was a travelling salesman and was not then at home, nor did she know when he would return. The agent told Mrs. Holmes what he wished to know, and left a letter to be forwarded to Holmes.

A few days later the insurance company received a letter from Holmes, in which he stated that he understood the company wanted some one to identify the body of the man who had been buried in Philadelphia as B. F. Perry, and said that he was well acquainted with Benjamin F. Pietzel, and, as his business would take him to Philadelphia within a few days, he would be glad to comply with their request. Accordingly, a few days later he appeared in Philadelphia and called upon the insurance people, and was told that the body of "Perry" was about to be exhumed; that Mrs. Pietzel and her attorney were on their way to Philadelphia at the time, and the company would be glad if Holmes would remain in the city and assist in the identification.

Holmes expressed an unwillingness to remain in the city any length of time, as his business called him elsewhere, but upon the company offering to pay him for his time and assuring him that it would be only a few days before the examination could be held, Holmes consented to remain. The next day a lawyer, representing himself as attorney for Mrs. Pietzel, appeared, but Mrs. Pietzel was not with him, the excuse being that she was unable to come on account of illness, so the attorney had brought the fifteen-year-old daughter of Mrs. Pietzel to assist in the identification. Mrs. Pietzel's lawyer and Holmes were introduced as strangers to each other. After the representative of the insurance company and of the deceased man had agreed upon the points of identification, the body was exhumed, and upon examination it was found to be identical with that of Benjamin F. Pietzel. The insurance company thereupon paid over to the attorney representing Mrs. Pietzel the full face of the policy, $10,000.

Some months afterward a representative of the insurance company, while in St. Louis, learned that a convict then in prison had a story of conspiracy to unfold, and after an interview with the convict the representative of the insurance company was satisfied of its truth. The principal was then consulted, and the company's detectives were put on the case. It became clear to them that there had been a conspiracy, but they had no idea at that time that Holmes had murdered Pietzel. They traced him from one place to another, and finally found him in Boston, but their evidence of a conspiracy was not sufficient at that time to cause his arrest. Having learned, however, that Holmes was wanted in Texas on a charge of horse stealing, the company arranged by telegraph to have him arrested and held in Boston on that charge, pending further investigation, so that they could get evidence together on the conspiracy charge.

This was done, but Holmes became aware immediately upon his arrest what the real charge against him was, and, thinking to cover up the murder, he consented to return to Philadelphia and to plead guilty to the conspiracy charge, hoping that the matter would there rest without further investigation, and so the greater crime would not be discovered. He said that the real Pietzel was still alive and was with his wife and children, and that the identification of the body in Philadelphia as that of Pietzel had been a fraud.

The agent, upon finding Mrs. Pietzel, discovered that she had never seen her husband since he left her shortly prior to his death, telling her that he would be away some time and that she should not worry about his absence. It was also discovered, after a long and searching inquiry, that the three Pietzel children, two girls and a boy, had not been with their mother since the identification in Philadelphia. The girl helped to identify the body of her father, and subsequently had been with her brother and sister, so the three children knew of the death of their father, but Mrs. Pietzel did not know of the death of her husband. Holmes succeeded in keeping the children apart from their mother until he murdered them and left their bodies buried in the cellars of houses which he had occupied, and it was not long after the last three tragedies that he was arrested. The attorney also who had been in the fraud was indicted for conspiracy, as it was shown that he had business transactions with Holmes prior to the time he was introduced to him as a stranger in Philadelphia.

The man who first gave the representative of the company a clew of the crime had been originally interested in the conspiracy, and the reason he gave for informing on his co-conspirators was that they had promised him $500 for his part in the crime, which promise they had failed to keep.

The Supreme Court of the United States has recently decided a mysterious disappearance case, which came from Texas, against the company, upholding the verdict of a jury which decided that the insured person had been actually killed, although there was no positive evidence of the fact. The man on whose life the policy was issued was shown to be financially embarrassed, and the companies contended that he was in no position to pay premiums on such large policies as he had secured. The circumstances surrounding his death were peculiar. He departed from his home to drive some distance to inspect some land, claims to which he had previously entered. He was to be gone several days, but, not returning a week or ten days later, his wife instituted a search. The searchers traced him to a camp on a river bank, where they found everything he had taken with him and evidence of his having camped out over night or having made all arrangements to do so. His two horses had been tied near by. One of them had broken loose and was discovered grazing not far away. The other had apparently been unable to escape, and had starved to death. There were tracks in the mud leading to the river bank, where they terminated. These tracks were identified as made by boots worn by the insured man. There the evidence terminated. Search was made for the body, but this was unsuccessful. The company tried to show that the man had been seen later in Mexico, but the evidence of this was not satisfactory, and the case was finally decided against it.

There was a sensational trial of Harry T. Hayward, in Minneapolis, in 1895, for the murder of Katherine Ging. The chief motive for that crime was the securing by Hayward of the money on insurance policies, the possession of which Hayward had obtained. Hayward was tried and found guilty, and was executed on December 1, 1895, having made theretofore a complete confession of his crime. In that case Hayward had committed the crime indirectly, by hiring a Swede, named Claus A. Blixt, to kill the woman, and this accomplice was the chief witness against Hayward on the trial.

One of the most atrocious and horrible crimes that has ever been committed to secure insurance money was the killing of Angie Stewart, a child of twelve years, in Canaan, Columbia County, N. Y., in the winter of 1867. The child was the daughter of Mrs. Mary H. Stewart, of Dayton, Ohio. She had been induced by a man calling himself Joseph Brown, and a woman he represented to be his wife, to allow Angie to go with them on a trip to Connecticut, where Brown represented they had formerly lived, saying that they would return within a short while, and that the trip would do Angie good.

Instead of going to Connecticut, Brown took Angie to Canaan, renting a house in the village. On the night of December 5, 1867, this house was discovered to be on fire, and when the neighbors, by strenuous efforts, put the fire out, they found the little girl, Angie, in the pantry, dead, and her body partially covered with rubbish. Mr. and Mrs. Brown were not at home. All the outside doors of the house had been found locked, and the pantry door had been tightly closed and fastened. In this case the coroner held an inquest, and reported that the little girl had come to her death by accidental means, caused by fire.

Shortly afterward, however, Brown and his supposed wife applied for the insurance money—$5,000—on the life of the little girl. The accident occurred so soon after the policy had been taken out that an investigation was started, and it was discovered that Brown had lived in various places under different names, and that the woman he lived with was not his wife, in all probability, and that they had been engaged in a number of questionable transactions. The company also caused the body of the little girl to be taken up, and upon an examination it was found that the child had not died from the effects of inhaling fire, but had been choked to death. The explanation that Brown made, that the child had probably got into the pantry while the fire had started from some unknown means and so had been smothered, was preposterous for several reasons. First, the pantry door was locked or fastened, and could only be opened from the outside; second, she was found in a pile of rubbish which was saturated with some inflammable oil; third, the condition of the body, as shown by the post-mortem examination, indicated that the little girl did not die from the effects of the fire at all, nor was there any evidence of a struggle to escape.

After the investigation by the company, Brown had gone to Connecticut, and was arrested in Hartford and taken to Canaan, where he was tried before Justice Peckham and a jury, convicted and subsequently executed. The woman was also indicted as being an accessory to the crime, but her case was never brought to trial.

HOME DISCOMFORTS.

From The Brooklyn Life.

"No," grumbled the husband in a spasm of confidence, to a friend, "I have no place at all for my books. The storage room is kept exclusively for my wife."

"And what does she do with it?"

"Oh, she puts away those things that are a trifle too good to be destroyed, yet scarcely good enough to be [illegible]"