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SUICIDE, MURDER AND ARSON.

The Life Insurance Companies Are Up to the Tricks of the Old Swindlers, but Occasionally They Get Caught—Some Notable Cases—Child Insurance.

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YEAR or two ago the beautiful city of Terre Haute was strangely excited over a supposed murder, followed by arson to conceal the first crime. A young man of the city (call him Jones) of good family connections and fine business standing for one of his age had been in the habit of lodging in an old log cabin in the lowlands west of the Wabash during his excursions in the country. One night the cabin was burned. Galvanized boxes were found. Evidence was presented that these might be the bones of the aforesaid young man, and so people said: "Poor Jones! What a pity!"

"People said" so, but the life insurance companies did not for they saw on their books the evidence that "poor Jones" was insured for a very large amount—altogether too large an amount for a man with so few dependents on him. They also had evidence that "poor Jones" had recently been associating with some very suspicious characters. The results need not be detailed—the reading public is quite familiar with them. The confession of a "pal" soon brought out the fact that "Jones" was living quietly in Chicago and that the whole affair was an ingeniously contrived scheme to swindle the life insurance companies.

Of course the uninitiated mass looked on this as an entirely unprecedented affair, and old men shook their heads and once more got out of bed for they had heard repeated ever since Adam used it to aggravate Seth. "The world is getting so corrupt in these late days." Equally, of course, the old men were and are wrong. The tricks on life insurance companies are as old as the business itself, and their reflection will show how they were suggested by still older tricks in divorce cases—especially that trick which lawyers call "persecution."

The once famous Kansas-Indiana case of Millerton versus Millerton will serve as an illustration of the general reader may find the outlines of it in Richardson's "Beyond the Mississippi."

Millerton left Indiana for Kansas in 1856, nominally to "aid in freedom's cause," really to get rid of his wife. Some may say "it's all the same," but let that pass. When affairs in Kansas got settled, his wife rejoined him. Thereupon he planned a little scheme. Driving down to the river one day with his wife and family, he convinced her that the water which he had high for safe fording; therefore he would swim across (carrying his summer clothes in a bunch on his head), get what was needed in Lawrence and swim back. His wife sat and watched him reach the middle of the river. Then he headed for the shore and "sank to rise no more"—that is, he rose no more to her view.

As a matter of fact, he dived and rose between two logs on the Lawrence side, breathed awhile, dived and rose again in a drift some rods down stream, and was by well calculated stages "disappeared." The funeral was well attended, and the bereaved widow was almost reconciled to her lot—women were scarce in Kansas in those days and therefore in demand—when an old neighbor arrived from Indiana with the news that Millerton was there in fine health and disposing himself as a gay widower. Mrs. Millerton hastened to her old home at once and captured him in the very presence of a lawyer. She supplied the details, for "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

If this and the like of this were all, we could afford to laugh, but there is an awfully dark side to the picture. In view of the abundant evidence it is impossible to doubt that scores—yes, hundreds—of most atrocious murders have been committed to secure life insurance money. And the sickening feature of it is that by the very nature of the case nearly all these murders have been done by poison, and that poison administered by the nearest relatives—by the husband to the wife, the wife much oftener to the husband, and, most horrible of all, by the mother to the son!

It is but a few months since John Shann of Princeton, N. J., died under circumstances which compelled his physician to say and the coroner's jury to believe that he had been poisoned, and when an inquest was ordered the authorities were horrified to find that the corpse had been disembow-

elled and stomach and intestines charged with mercuric iodine. His mother, Mrs. Mattie Shann, is now in prison charged with both crimes. The young man's life was insured, his mother being named as beneficiary. His father had died but a few months before under suspicious circumstances, being insured for the benefit of the widow. The insurance company has paid the claim in the case of John Shann, but Mrs. Shann will be tried on the charge of murder.

In the winter of 1889-90 a regular panic was created in London by publications on the horrors resulting from child life insurance. The original plan of insuring infants was a most benevolent one, and only the most suspicious person could have looked for such evils as actually resulted. By the payment of a mere trifle—usually 3 cents per week—the parents were insured a sum varying from \$40 to \$80 in case of the child's death, the design being that they should thus insure money enough to pay the funeral fees and expenses of sickness. Yet it was proved beyond the possibility of doubt that hundreds of drunken or brutal parents deliberately calculated on the speedy death of their infants and hastened that death by means which it sickens one to think of, much more to describe.

Of course these revelations sent the American authorities to investigating, and it was found that three companies were doing a heavy business in child life insurance.

It was also found, however, that these companies work on an entirely honest and conservative system and never insure where their agents suspect an intention to commit fraud or crime. Yet in spite of the

THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK.

Views of a Cantonian, Who Has Traveled and Read Much on Economic Topics.

ED. NEWS-DEMOCRAT:

You are aware that the entire Union is under the throes of a financial flurry just now. A few days ago a banker of this city told me that he thought the worst over, that Congress would this fall repeal Sherman's silver bill, and that prosperity and plenty might safely be looked for.

These are certainly reassuring words, but the condition of affairs compels me to reject them as fallacious. This financial flurry is not the outcome of a passing disturbance, but the result of the financial sins of three decades, dating from the close of the civil war to the present time. The people felt this instinctively last summer, and that their votes accordingly, setting aside a giant who carried a troublesome burden on his right shoulder, but instead of throwing it off entirely, shifts it upon his left. The Democratic party is expected to heal wounds which stupidity and evil intent combined have inflicted, and if they fail, as fall they must, for the time of miracles has gone by, the short-sighted masses will blame them for present troubles and a worse future attributable merely to the sins of their predecessors.

But let me quit generalities and draw in a few graphic outlines the evils which an unwise and vicious financial policy have brought upon us, with the prospect of a sudden ruin unless a sudden ray of light dawns. The situation of affairs is such that the change which the general ignorance of political economy of the masses and the selfish greed of the leaders makes highly improbable.

The Cleveland Press said truly the other day that the finances of a country should be conducted in the interest of the people, and not that of the bankers. Here you have the trouble in a nutshell. No sooner had the sound of the last gun died away, when the industrial spirit of the nation, which if you prefer became paramount in the branches of the government. Lincoln, the martyr, saw this and expressed his fears for the future in words of agony. Many have asserted, that the bullet which ended his life, was directed by the spirit of the nation, which if you prefer, became paramount in the branches of the government. Lincoln, the martyr, saw this and expressed his fears for the future in words of agony.

So great was his power over the masses; so powerful even his influence in the halls of Congress, that the entire country acted in accordance with his wishes. His lips being closed, the voice of selfishness, greed and ignorance prevailed, and measure after measure was passed during the years of his administration, the interest of the MANY. I have not the space here to repeat them all, nor to remind you of the untold misery which the strengthening act, the resumption of the currency, the establishment of the national banks brought upon millions. They are a matter of history, and will be properly judged and condemned by a more intelligent posterity, a posterity which will be glad to see the name of John Sherman at their head as their benefactor, and not benefactors of their country.

What I want to emphasize here, is the utter impossibility to cure the evils attending the currency, threatening us, by the half measures proposed by President Cleveland. The great trouble of the times is the attempt to confine the currency of the country to a gold basis. Do not object by saying: "We have now a large volume of paper currency, for your objection is ill-founded, since this currency is founded upon a gold basis and redeemable in gold on demand. It is a well known fact, and best known by Wall street, that we have not one fourth enough gold in the world to back our present paper currency on a cash basis. In fact, every sensible person knows that, were all depositors of the country to demand their deposits, not ONE bank in the Union could satisfy the demands of their creditors. I wish you feel you that gold is a resource from one end of the Union to the other, to startle the people, and convince them of the folly to expect salvation from a repeal of the silver act or the resumption of gold bonds.

The time will undoubtedly come, when people will laugh at the folly of basing the currency of a nation upon the intrinsic value of such currency. The day will come, when both gold and silver will be demoted, and it appears to me that the time is not far distant when a clearer idea of the nature and purpose of money, that glorious day could not be far distant. What is money? Simply an exchange for or rather of values. No one would work for gold, silver or paper money, if he could not get the things he needs for the necessities of life. Every sensible person must see moreover, that there is no necessity for an intrinsic value of the article on which the indebtedness of the State or individual is written. As long as the thing is not a commodity, but holds all the commodities of civilized life, he does not care, whether such indebtedness is written, printed or coined upon paper, gold or silver. The cheapest article will strike him as the best, if the investment in it, in a material is unnecessary waste. Would it not be folly to claim, that a yard stick must be made of gold, to be correct? As long as the paper currency of a country is absolutely safe, there is no necessity for either gold or silver. And now let me tell you, that gold is not a rare commodity, as history shows, has always fled into vaults, socks or pots, whenever the existence of a nation was at stake, while paper money has done everything in its power, to save the investment in it, in a material is unnecessary waste. Would it not be folly to claim, that a yard stick must be made of gold, to be correct? As long as the paper currency of a country is absolutely safe, there is no necessity for either gold or silver. 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