

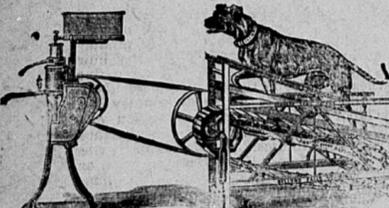
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for damages, but in many cases through Barton the adjustment of claims would not be made until much suffering and hardship had been endured.

There was a common feeling on the part of the townspeople that a meeting for public conference would result in much good, and there was also, as has been the case in other large horrors, a craving to relieve the strain of feeling by public gathering and consultation.

"Can you come out to the meeting, Hardy?" asked his friend.

Mr. Hardy thought a minute and replied, "Yes, I think I can." Already an idea had taken shape in his mind which he could not help feeling was inspired by God.

"Might be a good thing if you could come prepared to make some remarks. I find there is a disposition on the part of the public to charge the road with carelessness and mismanagement."

"I'll say a word or two," replied Mr. Hardy, and after a brief talk on business matters his friend went out.

Robert immediately sat down to his desk, and for an hour, interrupted only by an occasional item of business brought to him by his secretary, he jotted down copious notes. The thought which had come to him when his friend suggested the meeting was this: He would go and utter a message that burned within him, a message which the events of the past few days made imperative should be uttered. He went home absorbed in the great idea. He had once in his younger days been famous for his skill in debate. He had no fear of his power to deliver a message of life at the present crisis in his own. He at once spoke of the meeting to his wife.

"Mary, what do you say? I know every minute is precious. I owe to you and these dear ones at home a very sacred duty, but no less, it seems to me, is my duty to the society where I have lived all these years, doing literally nothing for its uplift toward God, who gave us all life and power. I feel as if he would put a message into my mouth that would prove a blessing to this community. It seems to me this special opportunity is providential."

"Robert," replied his wife, smiling at him through happy tears, "it is the will of God. Do your duty as he makes it clear to you."

It had been an agitating week to the wife. She anticipated its close with a feeling akin to terror. What would the end be? She was compelled to say to herself that her husband was not insane, but the thought that he was really to be called out of the world in some mysterious manner at the end of the rapidly approaching Sunday had several times come over her with a power that threatened her own reason.

Nevertheless the week so far, in spite of its terror and agitation, had a sweet joy for her. Her husband had come back to her, the lover as he once had been, only with the added tenderness of all the years of their companionship. She thanked the Father for it, and when the hour came for Robert to go down to the meeting she blessed him and prayed heaven to make his words to the people like the words of God.

"Father, what do you want me to do? Shall I stay here?" asked George, who had not stirred out of the house all day. He had watched by Clara faithfully. She was still in that mysterious condition of unconsciousness which made her case so puzzling to the doctor.

Mr. Hardy hesitated a moment, then said: "No, George. I would like to have you go with me. Alice can do all that is necessary. But let us all pray together now before we go out. The Lord is leading us mysteriously, but we shall some time know the reason why."

So in the room where Clara lay they all knelt down except Will, who lay upon a lounge near his unconscious sister. Mr. Hardy as he clasped his wife's hand in his own poured out his soul in this petition:

"Dear Lord, we know thou dost love us, even though we cannot always know why thou dost allow suffering and trouble, and we would thank thee for the things that cannot be destroyed, for the loves that cannot suffer death, for the wonderful promises of the life to come. Only we have been so careless of the things that belong to thy kingdom. We have been so selfish and forgetful of the great needs and sufferings and sins of earth. Pardon us, gracious Redeemer. Pardon me, for I am the chief offender. Yea, Lord, even as the robber on the cross was welcomed into paradise, welcome thou me. But we pray for our dear ones. May they recover. Make this beloved one who now lies unknowing among us to come back into the universe of sense and sound, to know us and smile upon us again.

"We say, 'Thy will be done.' Grand wisdom, for thou knowest best. Only our hearts will cry out for help, and thou knowest our hearts better than any one else. Bless me this night as I stand before the people. This is no selfish prayer, dear Lord. I desire only thy glory; I pray only for thy kingdom. But thou hast appointed my days to live. Thou hast sent me the message, and I cannot help feeling the solemn burden and joy of it.

"I will say to the people that thou art most important of all in this habitation of the flesh. And now bless us all. Give us new hearts. Make us to feel the true meaning of existence here. Reveal to us thy splendor. Forgive all the past and make impossible in the children the mistakes of the parent. Deliver us from evil, and thine shall be the kingdom forever. Amen."

When Mr. Hardy and George reached the town hall, they found a large crowd gathering. They had some difficulty in gaining entrance. Mr. Hardy at once passed up to the platform, where the chairman of the meeting greeted him and said he would expect

him to make some remarks during the evening.

Robert sat down at one end of the platform and watched the hall fill with people, nearly all well known to him. There was an unusually large crowd of boys and young men, besides a large gathering of his own men from the shops, together with a great number of citizens and business men, a representative audience for the place, brought together under the influence of the disaster and feeling somewhat the breaking down of artificial social distinctions in the presence of the grim leveler Death, who had come so near to them the last few days.

There were the usual opening exercises common to such public gatherings. Several well known business men and two or three of the ministers, including Mr. Jones, made appropriate addresses. The attention of the great audience was not labored for, the occasion itself being enough to throw over the people the spell of subdued quiet.

When the chairman announced that "Mr. Robert Hardy, our well known railroad manager, will now address us," there was a movement of curiosity and some surprise, and many a man leaned forward and wondered in his heart what the wealthy railroad man would have to say on such an occasion. He had never appeared as a speaker in public, and he passed generally in Barton for the cold, selfish, haughty man he had always been.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DO NOT BAND TOGETHER.

There Are No Such Things as "Gangs" of Criminals.

"The 'gang' idea as applied to criminals is a ridiculous blunder," said an experienced detective. "There are no such things except in story books. There seems to be something about the inner nature of confirmed crooks that forbids them to band together. Honest folks instinctively drift toward each other and form societies and combinations for self protection and mutual interest, but criminals are exactly the reverse.

"Safe burglars generally work in parties of three, but that is because three men are necessary to the average 'job'—two to manipulate the drill and other tools and one to 'pipe' or watch the outside. Whenever it is possible for a burglar to 'turn a trick,' as they call it, single handed he is certain to go alone. It is the same with all other thieves.

"You read of a 'gang of pickpockets' descending on some country fair. They do their work in pairs, so in that case it would simply mean that six or eight of the crooked couples happened to strike the place at the same time. The detective novel theory is that criminals are organized into great societies with regular heads and cast iron laws and bylaws, to violate which means sudden and mysterious death.

"That is all rubbish. If such an organization was formed, the police would know it ten minutes after the first meeting adjourned. One of the things that keep thieves apart is their horrible treachery. I have been a detective for over a quarter of a century, and I never knew a single crook who would not betray any other crook merely to curry favor with the officers. They are well aware of that little peculiarity themselves and dread one another a good deal more than they dread the authorities."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

SOLDIERS IN BATTLE.

The Peculiar Way Some Men Act When They Are Wounded.

If you take a dozen soldiers as like each other as peas so far as height, weight, strength, age, courage and general appearance go and wound them all in precisely the same way, you will find that scarcely any two of them are affected alike.

One man on receiving a bullet in his leg will go on fighting as if nothing had happened. He does not know, in fact, that he now contains a bullet. But perhaps in two or three minutes he will grow faint and fall.

Another man, without feeling the slightest pain, will tremble all over, totter and fall at once, even though the wound is really very slight.

A third will cry out in a way to frighten his comrades and will forget everything in his agony. A fourth will grow stupid and look like an idiot.

Some soldiers wounded in the slightest manner will have to be carried off the field. Others, although perhaps fatally injured, can easily walk to the ambulance. Many die quickly from the shock to the nervous system.

A very curious case is recorded in the surgical history of the American civil war, in which three officers were hit just at the same time. One had his leg from the knee down carried away, but he rode ten miles to the hospital. Another lost his little finger, and he became a raving maniac, while a third was shot through the body and, though he did not shed a drop of blood externally, he dropped dead from the shock.—New York Telegram.

Pooled Them.

Mrs. Walldoff—Which of these ancestors are yours and which are your husband's?

Mrs. Justinn—Oh, it's a funny thing about them ancestors! The decorators got 'em mixed while fixing the gallery, and we couldn't tell 't'other from which, so we bunched the whole lot and called 'em our ancestors.—Judge.

A Healthful Swelling.

Physician (with ear to patient's chest)—There is a curious swelling over the region of the heart, sir, which must be reduced at once.

Patient (anxiously)—That swelling is my pocketbook, doctor. Please don't reduce it too much.—Harlem Life.

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