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THE CALL

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SAN FRANCISCO, MONDAY, JULY 26, 1909.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

DEATH FOLLOWS IN WAKE OF THE 'PHONE BRIBERY

Albert J. Steiss, Important Witness Against Glass and Halsey Expires Abroad

Former Assistant General Manager of Company, Succumbs in Germany

Fatality Still Pursues Men High in Councils of Those Implicated in Scandal

DEATH again has trailed afar an expatriated officer of the Pacific states telephone company, and an important witness against Louis Glass and Theodore V. Halsey, indicted officials of the corporation, charged with bribing members of the Ruef-Schmidt board of supervisors.

An Important Witness

Steiss was a very important and material witness at the trials of Halsey and Glass. His testimony at the Glass trial went far to prove that Halsey was directly accountable to Glass for his actions and movements. A chart which Steiss drew at the Glass trial gave a graphic delineation of the relative positions of the telephone company officials. After the graft prosecution attacked the telephone company's corruption Steiss retired from the active work of the company and moved his family to Palo Alto, where it was popularly conceded he was living on an ample pension given by the predatory corporation.

Pursued by Fatality

A fatality had pursued the men who were high in the councils of the Pacific states telephone company at the time that Halsey hired a room in the Mills building and passed tainted currency to members of the board of supervisors to insure that they would vote against granting a franchise to the Home telephone company, then seeking to gain an entrance into the San Francisco field. In a material sense the bribery was a failure. Abe Ruef was plucked because Halsey operated directly with the supervisors and not through him and sold out the board a second time to the Home company.

Halsey Is Stricken

Halsey was brought to trial in August, 1907, and during the trial was stricken with appendicitis. The proceedings were stopped and a resumption of the case has been delayed pending his recovery. Two years have passed since the attack, and he will again be brought to trial soon.

Krause Ends His Life

In November of last year he took a trip from Cherbourg, France, to Queens-town, Ireland, on the steamer Adriatic. About the time he sailed from the French port he read in the papers that Francis J. Heney had been shot by Morris Haas and that the prosecution of all grafters was to be pressed relentlessly. Then Krause, the popular, light hearted publicity man for the company, alone off a foreign shore, cut his throat with a razor. He was found dead in his stateroom on the vessel.

In May of this year William Kennedy, an official of the company, was sent out of the jurisdiction of the California courts to British Columbia. Kennedy was mayor of Larkspur, Marin county, California.

TRAGEDIES FOLLOW TELEPHONE GRAFT

March 22, 1907—Louis Glass and Theodore V. Halsey, indicted for bribing members of the Ruef-Schmidt board of supervisors in interest of Pacific States telephone Company.

August, 1907—Halsey attacked with appendicitis during his trial.

November 19, 1908—John Krause, assistant general agent of company, commits suicide while traveling in Europe, where he fled the year before.

May, 1909—William Kennedy, former official of company, sent to British Columbia.

July 24, 1909—Albert J. Steiss, former assistant general manager and chief witness against Louis Glass, dies at Nauehm, Germany, where he had gone, supposedly under instructions from the corporation heads.

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"WHEN MY LAST TWENTY GOES I WILL GO TOO"

—Charles Walker
Carries Out Threat of Suicide When His Last Dollar Is Spent For Liquor

Savings of a Lifetime Furnish a Month of Revelry For Ship Carpenter

"WHEN MY LAST 'twenty' is blown in, then I'll blow out my brains," Charles Walker, a ship carpenter living at 452 Drumm street, said repeatedly to his landlady, Mrs. F. C. Saralza.

For nearly all of his 52 years of life Walker had labored hard at his trade. He saved and stinted himself. His companions, earlier in life, would coax him to join them in their revelries, but Walker would stay apart, saving his money dollar by dollar. They called him the close one down in the shipyards where he worked. One month ago Walker had \$1,600 in the savings bank.

"Going to Have Good Time"

Then he changed his mode of life. He started to draw money from the bank. His friends questioned his action, and Walker declared himself for the first time—pronounced the grim sentence which he had passed upon himself.

"I'm going to have a good time now," he declared. "I have saved, now I am going to spend. And when my money is all gone, then I'll go, too."

Then was started a period of dissipation. The high lights of the night-time were sought by him. He left his work; his tools he distributed among his friends. He filled his pockets with the gold the bankers had been keeping for him. He quickly shifted his balance around the neighborhood have unearthed no clew to her present whereabouts. The steward at the hospital was left speechless at the whirlwind entry, brief hysterical moment of entreaty and protest and sudden disappearance, and declared the incident seems to him like a passage from a tale of adventure.

When Walker started on his certain march toward death he had \$1,600 in the bank. There were no friends or relatives dependent upon him for support, and "money," said Walker, "is minted but to be spent."

Figures Out His End

Walker could figure his end to a mathematical certainty. He knew how much money he could spend in a day, a week or a month. The day of his death he predestined and went his way, doing a kindness here, helping a fellow to satisfy a thirst as insistent as his own, meeting his obligations and seeing before him a gay period of life and a certain day of death, a day as certain as if it had been ordained by a jury and not by a judge.

His Last Coin

As the bar tender placed the bottles on the polished surface Walker spun the \$20 gold piece. He winked gravely into the graven eye of the woman on the coin. His mind ran over the joyous life he had had during the last month, while his money was going. He spun the coin affectionately. It represented all that was between him and death, but while he toyed with the metal he granted himself no slight reprieve.

The clock in the saloon struck eight times. A maudlin wretch, steadying himself against the bar rail, chanted sadly:

"The stroke of 8 is the stroke of fate That tells when a man must die."

He reached his lodgings Saturday morning. About 11 o'clock that morning Mrs. Saralza, the landlady, heard a noise in Walker's room. "It sounded like the bursting of an inflated paper bag," she said, and thought no more of it. Her philosophy contained no symbolism which likened life to an empty paper bag.

She went into the room yesterday morning to make the bed and found Walker's body there. He was dead. There was a bullet hole in his head. When the coroner's deputies searched the room they found not a cent.

ROBBERS SECURE BOOTY FROM OAKLAND HOME

Jewelry Valued at \$300 Is Stolen by Daring Men

OAKLAND, July 25.—Shortly before noon today, while the members of the family were gathered in a back parlor, burglars broke into the front room of the residence of S. M. Haslett, at 1655 Clinton avenue and stole jewelry valued at about \$300. The thieves escaped without being detected. Their booty consisted of gold rings, pins and brooches.

The police were notified as soon as the robbery was discovered and detectives were detailed upon the case at once, but thus far no clew to the identity of the burglars has been obtained.

SPREE AND DEATH END SOBER LIFE

After living an abstemious life for 52 years, Charles Walker of 452 Drumm street took his savings, amounting to \$1,600, from the bank and allowed himself one month of hilarious living.

"When my money is all gone, then I'll go, too," he said. On Friday night he changed his last \$20 gold piece. His dead body was found yesterday morning in his room. Not a cent of money was found with the remains.

WOMAN A MYSTERY AT PARK HOSPITAL

Men Ruch Her in From Auto for Alleged Suicidal Attempt and All Quickly Depart

An auto dashed up to the park emergency hospital yesterday afternoon with desperate speed and two men sprang from the machine as it came to a stop, carrying a woman between them in their arms. They hurried into the hospital with their burden, a beautiful young woman, and gasped out to the steward that she had taken carbolic acid. Preparations were made to aid her at once, but the woman protested, struggling free, and took a few steps toward the door. Her companions caught her as she collapsed, but still she refused treatment, and, in desperation, the men bundled her back into the auto and sped away in search of a private physician.

One of the men gave the woman's name as Virginia Blakeley. She resided at the Hotel Kirk.

Where the woman was taken is a matter of conjecture, for inquiries around the neighborhood have unearthed no clew to her present whereabouts. The steward at the hospital was left speechless at the whirlwind entry, brief hysterical moment of entreaty and protest and sudden disappearance, and declared the incident seems to him like a passage from a tale of adventure.

DR. DOROTHIA WATSON AND HARRY BRANN TO WED

Prominent Clubman Quietly Secures License

Great surprise was occasioned yesterday in club and social circles by the announcement that Dr. Dorothea Watson and Harry H. Brann, prominent clubman and merchant, plan to be married within a few days, very quietly.

Doctor Watson is one of the foremost women physicians of the city, and inquiry at her home, 2851 Clay street, was met yesterday with the statement that she was out of the city.

Astonishment was occasioned a little more than a year ago when Brann's wife filed suit against the senior member of the firm of Brann & Prior, ship chandlers, on sensational grounds. The suit was not contested, and April 10 of last year Mrs. Brann was granted an interlocutory decree.

Brann is a prominent member of the Olympic club and is well known socially. Mrs. Brann's final decree became effective April 10 of this year, and Saturday Brann obtained a marriage license for himself and Doctor Watson.

OIL ON TELEPHONE WIRES TIES UP THE SYSTEM

Insulators on Long Line Will All Be Washed

VALLEJO, July 25.—Because of oil deposits on the insulators of the long distance lines of the Pacific States telephone and telegraph company from Crockett to Oakland a big gang of men has been employed to wash every insulator along that long stretch of wire. For several weeks telephonic communication between Vallejo and Oakland has been getting worse. Investigations made daily of various supposed faults failed to clear up the short circuiting and grounding of wires until it was discovered that when the dew from the bay fell at night time it was attracted to the insulators by the oily deposits on the terra cotta, which resulted in grounding the wires.

The telephonemen are of the opinion that the deposits are from the fumes of the Union oil company plant at Oleum and the Standard oil works at Richmond.

FIRE DESTROYS COAST'S LARGEST ALFALFA MILL

Damage Resulting Amounts to Nearly \$300,000

SACRAMENTO, July 25.—News was received here today of the burning near Tehama last night of the large alfalfa mill belonging to W. E. Gerber and E. Clemens Horst. The mill was declared to have been the largest on the coast. The loss is estimated at nearly \$300,000.

RONCOVERI IN A CLASH WITH SCHOOL BOARD

Thomas E. Hayden Charges Him With Claiming Too Much Credit

Forces Him to Sign Report That He Did Not Win Water Rate Reduction

STRIFE in the board of education concerning the distribution of praise in the matter of the reduction secured from the Spring Valley water company in the school department's water bill has culminated in an open clash between Superintendent of Schools Alfred Roncoveri, who discovered that the city was being mulcted regularly each month by the corporation, called the attention of the board to the matter and personally investigated it, and Thomas E. Hayden, a member of the school board, who actually secured the \$2,500 reduction from the octopus. The clash is the first open rupture between the two men.

It appears that Hayden has been preparing a protest, which he purposed should be signed by all the members of the school board, censuring the school superintendent in harsh terms for the alleged offense of taking to himself credit in the matter that belonged, so the protest recited, to the whole board of education.

Clash in Office

"I understand," Roncoveri taxed Hayden Saturday when the two met in the office of the school department, "that you are circulating the report that I am endeavoring to take to myself more credit than I deserve in the matter of the reduction in the school water bill secured from the Spring Valley. Did I not submit a communication to the board Wednesday covering this?"

"Yes; you did," Hayden answered, "but I believe that you told a different story to the press."

"What I tell to the press is what I tell to you, and tell it to your face," Roncoveri shouted. "If the newspapers choose to give me credit in this matter it is no fault of mine, and due in no wise to any effort of mine to rush into publicity. However that be, I do not mind telling you that I do consider my investigations of all the water rate paid by schools in all the cities across the bay and in Los Angeles and other cities, with the fact that I discovered this robbery of the city and reported it to your board, and the added fact that I went at the matter in a businesslike way, with the idea of securing some permanent and decided change for the better, of a whole lot more importance than the fact that you, while these negotiations were in progress, went off to the water company's office and secured this reduction, for this year only, on the plea that the board has no money."

Would Call Reporters

"I will call all the newspaper reporters I have talked with to prove on their oaths that I have done no press agent work," Roncoveri declared. "If they concluded, after looking over the situation, that I was entitled to praise, then that is a matter to take up with them, not me."

Hayden left at this juncture. At the board's meeting last Wednesday, when Roncoveri signed the check for \$5,500 for the water company and presented with it a communication stating that, as superintendent, he had done all possible by securing the sworn affidavits of the meter readers, to substantiate the bill, Hayden remarked that the superintendent seemed to convey the impression that the reduction had been secured through his efforts.

"The reduction was secured by you, Mr. Hayden, by telling the water company that the school board had no money," Roncoveri said. "If the communication does not state that, please interline anything you wish, and I will OK it."

Hayden inserted in the document a sentence stating that the school board had secured the reduction, and Roncoveri signed it.

Water Bill Robbery

Roncoveri suspected an enlargement in the water bill last February, when a bill for \$9,000 was presented, and immediately apprised the board that they should have the school principals read the meters in company with the Spring Valley inspectors. This the board has not done. He also recommended to the board that they notify the water company to that effect, and also demand that the 86 schools in the city be rated as one consumer, and, therefore be entitled to the sliding scale of prices, as is the case in all other California cities. Each San Francisco school now is looked upon by the water company as a separate consumer, although only one bill is presented for the water and only one check in payment sent to the water company. These things also the board has not considered.

There is to be a special meeting of the board of education this morning, and a warm session is expected.

TO KEEP UP FIGHT AGAINST WATER CO.

By ALFRED RONCOVERI Superintendent of Schools

The water company has been and is robbing the city and I will not stop until this is brought to an end, for we need the money that the company is now getting without being entitled to it, to buy necessary things for our pupils.

And the fight will go on, no matter what petty squabbles are started in regard to the percentage of praise that the members of the school department shall have.

Applying for a reduction in the water bill on the plea of poverty is a baby act. This matter of the charge to be made against our schools by Spring Valley will have to be met squarely and settled and no temporary expedient will suffice.

SEELEY TO MANAGE BIG NEW SYNDICATE

Largest Vaudeville Booking Agency in World to be Run From Here

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

NEW YORK, July 25.—Within the last few days the largest direct vaudeville booking agency in the world has been incorporated. In conjunction with its parent company it will control a chain of theaters covering the whole of the United States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Canadian boundary to the gulf of Mexico.

Walter Hoff Seelye of San Francisco will be vice president and general manager of the corporation and will conduct the new enterprise from the Valencia theater building in San Francisco.

Articles of incorporation will be filed in San Francisco tomorrow.

The new company is the William Morris company, western, and it will have charge of all the Morris bookings west of Chicago, controlling at the start between 25 and 30 theaters. This, in connection with William Morris, Inc., which controls all the Morris bookings east of Chicago, and the opening of new theaters as far south as New Orleans, will give the independent vaudeville corporation control of more than 50 amusement houses in the United States.

Round World Loop

Arrangements are practically finished for an affiliation of the Morris interests with those of Beresford & Gibbons of London, the largest booking agents in Europe, which will give the Morris company a circuit around the world, including theaters in Australia.

The new western combination takes over the chain of theaters formerly owned or controlled by J. Charles Green and Walter Hoff Seelye of San Francisco, operating as the Valencia theater company. The capital stock of the new company is \$1,000,000. Morris is president, and Seelye vice president and general manager. The chain will be operated from the Valencia theater building in San Francisco.

American music halls will be opened in 15 western cities September 15, and about a month later 10 or 15 more will be opened in other cities. The places in the new circuit are San Francisco, Denver, Salt Lake, Portland, Seattle, Ogden, Omaha, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Oakland, Tacoma, Butte, Helena, Spokane and Vancouver. Six new theater buildings which will be owned by the new company are under construction; others are held under 20 year leases.

Long Time Contracts

In opening this field of increased activity the Morris interests will engage more and better features, and will take all the "top line" acts on long time contracts. In making bookings for the coming season they will be able to give the various performers at least 52 weeks of solid engagements, and when the world circuit is completed they contemplate putting some of the largest vaudeville stars on five years' contracts.

Theaters have been acquired recently by the Morris interests in Atlanta, Memphis and New Orleans, and will be opened this coming fall. Morris will sail soon for London, where the arrangements for the world circuit will be completed.

Walter Hoff Seelye said to The Call correspondent that he would leave for home tomorrow, stopping en route in Denver and Salt Lake, reaching San Francisco in about two weeks.

ANTI-GAMBLING LAW IN FORCE IN MARYSVILLE

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

MARYSVILLE, July 25.—Marysville's new gambling ordinance goes into effect Wednesday. Under the new law every game of any sort, whether with cards or other apparatus, where money, checks or other representatives of value form the stakes, is illegal. Slot machines are not molested as long as the prizes are merchandise.

GLIDES IN MONOPLANE TO ENGLAND

Flight Over Channel From France Successfully Made by Bleriot

Sails in Early Dawn, Defeats Rivals and Wins a \$5,000 Prize

Record Voyage Through Air in 20 Foot Machine Weighing 400 Pounds

Aviator Decorated With the Legion of Honor and Made a Hero

BLERIOT'S FLIGHT ACROSS CHANNEL

Louis Bleriot, a French aviator, crossed the English channel from France early yesterday morning in an airship. The epoch making flight was made with one of the smallest monoplanes ever used. The voyage of more than 20 miles was concluded in less than half an hour, this being twice as swift a passage as the fastest mail-boats. His speed approximated from 45 to 60 miles. Bleriot by his voyage won a \$5,000 prize offered by a London newspaper and stole a march on his competitors, Hubert Latham and Count de Lambert, both of whom intended to make the flight today. Bleriot's monoplane measured but 20 feet across, and with a 25 horsepower motor the entire machine weighed only 400 pounds.

DOVER, Eng., July 25.—This sleepy seaport town experienced the keenest thrill known in a generation when at sunrise today a white winged birdlike machine, with loudly humming motor, swept out from the haze obscuring the sea toward the distant French coast and, circling twice above the high, chalky cliffs of Dover, alighted on English soil. Louis Bleriot had succeeded in crossing the English channel in an airship.

Bleriot, portly and red mustached, calmly descended from the saddle, limping on a bandaged foot which had been burned on his previous overland flight.

Friends Fall on Him

Immediately two compatriots, who had been waving a big tricolor flag as a signal for the landing place, fell upon him enthusiastically, embracing him, shouting, and pounding him on the back. They, with a few soldiers and others who happened to be on the scene, were the only persons to witness the finish of a remarkable feat.

Bleriot left Les Barreques, three miles from Calais, about 4:30 a. m., on one of the smallest monoplanes ever used. He crossed the channel in little less than half an hour, twice as swiftly as the fastest mail boat. His speed averaged more than 45 miles an hour; sometimes it approximated 60 miles. He kept about 250 feet above the sea level and for about 10 minutes in mid-channel was out of sight of both coasts and the French torpedo boat destroyer which followed him with his wife and friends aboard.

The wind was blowing about 20 miles an hour and the sea was choppy. The aviator was swathed in a single garment of drilling, impervious to the wind, which covered him from the top of his head to his feet, only his face showing. He wore also a cork lifebelt.

Eyewitness Talks

An eyewitness of the landing thus describes it: "Very early in the morning a wireless message was received from Calais that Bleriot intended to make the flight. Then in quick succession came the news that he had left land, that he was flying high and was fast making Dover. It was expected that he would land west of Dover, but from the direction taken it was soon evident that he would alight to the eastward. Only a few minutes after the wireless announcing the start, the laconic message, 'Out of sight,' was received at Dover. Hardly had this been transcribed when the keen eyed coast guard, scanning the sea with his telescope, shouted that Bleriot was within sight."

"Hastening to the cliff of the bay I was fortunate enough to arrive just before the airship, which was flying fast like a gigantic hawk. The craft approached the cliff, growing larger every instant.

Landing Is Graceful

"The noise of the engines was audible in a moment, so swiftly did it come. Bleriot swooped overhead and then turned his machine to the east and came to the ground in the meadow. It circled with consummate ease and