

"WHAT DID I DO WITH MY CHILDREN?"



Brockton, Mass.—"I opened my cloak and took the children under it, one on each side. From that time till I woke up everything is a blank."

Twenty-five trembling words, spoken by a disheveled, shaking woman, yet behind them lies the tragedy of a wrecked home, the remarkable disappearance of two human beings as if the ground had opened to swallow them, and a mystery which has baffled the keenest detective minds of New England.

A mother calling at the schoolhouse door for her boy and girl, three figures disappearing into the woods, a great storm cloak flung open to shelter two small forms—a blank of 24 hours, and then a disheveled, quivering mother-form being hurried to an insane asylum.

What happened during that period of mental death?

And where are the children?

On Monday, December 2, soon after nine o'clock, Mrs. Mary R. C. Ball, wife of John Ball, left her home at 26 Holbrook avenue, and walked hurriedly to the Winthrop school, where her children were engaged in their studies. Mary Grace Ball, aged nine, and Thomas Ball, aged seven, were excused by their teachers at the request of their mother, who was apparently quite composed and natural in her bearing. They put on their warm coats and toques and mittens and trotted down the schoolyard path, one on either side of the tall, cloaked figure.

Children Went Joyfully.

Joyous anticipations were aroused in their childish minds. Christmas was at hand. Perhaps they were going shopping! Perhaps they were going to the woods to gather evergreens! As to where they really went, directly from the schoolhouse, opinions differ. This may have been because Brockton had something else to think about during the next few hours. The Ball home on Holbrook avenue was in flames. There was a fire to be put out and to be discussed, and it was so unfortunate that it happened while Mrs. Ball was away shopping!

However, since the tragedy has become the sole topic of conversation in the little manufacturing city of Brockton, one man recalls that he saw the mother and her children together about 2:30 o'clock that afternoon. Two children, who knew the Ball family well, claim to have seen the mother without the children on Brockton street at 4:30 of that eventful Monday afternoon.

But the one tangible piece of evidence is that Mrs. Ball, unaccompanied by her children, stopped at a lunch cart for a mouthful of food at Avon, a little town just north of Brockton, on Tuesday evening, December 3. Later that night she was found by a nearby farmer, A. L. Pinto, in his barn and was ordered away. The children were not with her. Pinto did not know who she was and took her for some poor, drunken wretch.

Instinct Led Woman Home.

Two nights later, on Thursday, December 5, Mrs. Ball staggered into the home of Mrs. Baxter, who lived directly opposite the Ball home in Brockton. The Baxters were terrified by the figure which stumbled across their threshold. Her clothes were in disorder. Her fingers were grimy and torn as though she had been digging in the frozen earth. Across her throat were great bloody scratches. All reason had fled. Her eyes were wild, her speech incoherent.

The next morning a raving maniac, Mary Ball was taken to the asylum for the insane at Taunton, Mass.

But where were the children?

The distracted father asked it. The excited neighbors echoed his question. The county officials considered it their duty to find out. Detectives

came from all over New England to join in the search. The Brockton Enterprise offered a reward of \$100 for the recovery of the children, dead or alive. Brockton citizens raised \$400 more, and more detectives, professional and amateur, flocked to the scene.

Woods Thoroughly Searched.

Every inch of the frozen woods into which the woman and her children had disappeared was raked over. The Avon reservoir, beyond the woods, was dragged. Farmers all around Brockton neglected their affairs in their frantic efforts to unearth the bodies of the two little ones. The police matron of Brockton was sent to the asylum at Taunton in the hope that talking woman to woman, she might obtain some clew from the demented mother. But she came home with word that her attempt had failed. Mrs. Ball's mind was a blank.

Then came a day when some children playing in the woods near the suburb of Holbrook, five miles from the Ball home, came upon some juvenile raiment—a boy's blouse, two union suits and a little girl's undershirt. These were partially but not completely identified by the distracted father, for man-like, he was not up on the details of the family wardrobe. And then, while searching parties raked and scraped the woodland in which these garments had been found, the father received word that his wife seemed to be quite rational again.

Mother's Memory Gone.

So to the Taunton asylum he hurried alone. Unaccompanied by hysterical women or keen-eyed detectives, he hoped that in a quiet, heart-to-heart talk with his wife he might obtain some clew to the whereabouts of his children.

"I took my children under my cloak. They were cold and crying. The rest is a blank."

Behind that moment of motherly instinct when she stretched out the protection of arms and woolen folds to envelop her shivering children, Mrs. Ball's memory cannot go. Sometimes she gropes wildly for facts, and says a woman in a red automobile took the children away. But always she realizes that the children are gone, that none can find them, and that behind the veil of her clouded mind lie the facts which she cannot reach.

Grave physicians and alienists have visited this woman, striving to decide whether it is a lapse of memory pure and simple, or a return of the mental malady from which she suffered four years ago. At that time she was confined to the asylum because, on the death of her youngest child, she had developed a curious homicidal mania, brought on by excessive grief. But as time cured the wound her mental equilibrium was restored, and she returned to her home, where apparently she was devoted to the two remaining children.

Shock May Restore Reason.

Her present condition in nowise resembles her former unfortunate state. Then she was violent and noisy. Now her mind is simply a blank. And Dr. Goss, superintendent of the asylum, who has been studying her case, believes that unless her brain receives some terrible shock her memory will never be restored. Her recollections of what happened between the time she took her children under the shelter of her cloak and reason resumed its sway in a ward of the asylum will be aroused only by a shock as great as the one which robbed her of reason.

And what shock was that?

This is the question which is baffling physicians, detectives and relatives of the unhappy family.

Did Mrs. Ball accidentally set her

house on fire, and then, in a spasm of terror, race away with her children from the results of her carelessness? And if so, at what psychological moment was her reason destroyed—at sight of the flames, or when she found herself alone in the woods with her children?

Or did she feel the approaching return of the dreaded malady, and, fearing for the future of her children without her care and oversight, spirit them away? And, if so, where did she leave them?

May Have Sent Children Away.

Some few Brocktonites believe that because the father had been full of rumors regarding unhappiness in the Ball home she really did arrange to have some one come with a red automobile and take her children where they might be cared for.

But such reasoning does not satisfy the majority of those who have worked on the case. The majority believe that the woman, in horror at the malady which was slowly creeping upon her, took her children to some lonely spot and killed them, then with the cunning of the madwoman, hid them beyond all finding. Perhaps the torn hands came from digging in the half-frozen ground that she might hide the silent little forms. Perhaps the scratches on her throat came not from her own fingers, but from the tiny hands fighting for their lives. And who shall say at what instant reason was dethroned, or what act of her own or another swept like a sharp knife through the tottering brain and left it a blank?

Perhaps Mrs. Ball knows to-day where the children are, and, with demonic cunning, refuses to let the father claim his own flesh and blood. Perhaps, if she would, she could lead the searching parties to the very spot where the silent forms are buried. Perhaps her mind was never a blank. But history, medical and otherwise, gives her the benefit of the doubt.

Resembles Famous Stories.

Who does not recall Julian Hawthorne's great story, "Archibald Malmaison," whose hero, from brain shock, reverted every seven years to the mental state of seven years before, recalling in minutest detail everything that had happened when this peculiar psychological and mental paroxysm had overtaken him? And poor Archibald, when he was 28, remembered that on the night when he was 21 he had hidden his bride of an hour in a dungeon, where none of the merry wedding guests might find her, while he went to bring her wine and cake from the wedding feast. And as he went down the winding stairs the hand of time had touched him, setting

him back seven years and blotting out all memory of what had happened between his fourteenth birthday and his twenty-first. And so it happened that when, with his twenty-eighth birthday, came memories of the twenty-first, he remembered his bride and went to take her the cake and the wine, and behold! there, "neath the wedding veil, lay the bones and the dust of her whom his retainers had sought for weary months.

Then there is Sir Gilbert Parker's "The Right of Way," the tale of the young lawyer who, struck on the head, roamed among the loggers, his brain a blank, until another and an equally great shock restored reason. And today Booth Tarkington is contributing to Everybody's in "The Guest of Quenay" a story on precisely the same line, of a brilliant mind stricken and then restored in both instances by shock.

And if the alienists now studying Mrs. Ball's case decide that shock alone will restore her reason and provide the key to the mystery of the two lost children, will the law permit them to apply the test, to administer the shock?

If you are looking for happiness, why not try to look on the bright side of things?

BUILT ON CONCERTINA PLAN.

Lightkeeper Measures Six Feet Six Inches in His Stockings.

Like the towering pines that fringe the North Carolina coast, upon which he was born, in sight of dreaded Hatteras, Fabius Evans Simpson, the assistant keeper of Lazaretto light-house, at the entrance to Baltimore harbor, can lay claim to be the tallest lightkeeper in the Fifth lighthouse district, if not level with the tallest in the service from Maine to Rio Grande.

He is only 23 years old and is built on the concertina plan. When he rises from a sitting posture one wonders how much more remains to be unfolded before he is straightened out. He is six feet six inches in his stocking feet.

His parents were reared alongside the sea, and he comes of a family that has figured in the annals of the lighthouse service. Alpheus W. Simpson, father of the young man, was keeper of North river light station, and his uncle, Fabius Evans Simpson, is now in charge of the exhibit of the lighthouse board at the Jamestown exposition. Another uncle, A. J. Simpson, is keeper of Southwest Point light, all in North Carolina. Young Simpson says he will stick to the business, believing he has inherited an ambition for the service in which his family has figured for many years.

He could not furnish a full length picture of himself. He said he tried to get a photographer in North Carolina to take all of him, but the artist said he could only do it in sections, and then paste them together, which, he thought, would give an idea of his client's towering figure. To do so the photographer wanted to charge extra for the second section, and the picture was not taken.

"PRANKS" PLAYED IN YOUTH.

Children of Other Days Were Not as Good as Supposed.

"Don't do as I do; do as I say to do," is the advice which nearly all parents could give to their children— for, verily, the pranks of a father and mother in the telling sound very much worse than anything of which the modern child is capable.

Here are a few stories which a certain well-known doctor tells to his very dignified little daughter—who, by the way, listens in astonishment, disapproves entirely, but recounts to her friends with a disapproving pride, if such a thing is possible, in the whole affair.

"We certainly must have been rather bad children, my sister and I," prefaced the gentleman the other day

FIGHT TO EDUCATE A CHILD.

Twelve-Year-Old Cellist, Barber's Daughter, is Musical Genius.

New York.—Helene Scholder, the 12-year-old cello prodigy, has been granted permission by the courts to go to Europe to continue her musical education there.

The decision is the culmination of a remarkable law-suit between a New York cello instructor and the girl's father, Maurice Scholder.

Like her elder sister, Henrietta, who attained fame as a child pianist, Helene Scholder had the unusual experience of seeing wealthy men and women vie with one another for the privilege of giving her a musical education. There was litigation before Henrietta was allowed to go to Europe to study also.

In the case of Helene the father had signed a ten-year contract with Prof. Karl Griener to leave the child under his tutelage. A dispute arose, and Scholder had an opportunity to send the girl to Europe.

Then the professor applied for an injunction to restrain Scholder from sending Helene away. The application has just been thrown out by Judge Leventritt in the supreme court.

Scholder, the father of the musical children, is a barber. His ambition was to become a professor of music, but lack of funds interfered and he became a hairdresser, stifling the passion for music.

His eldest daughter, Henrietta, has just returned from Vienna, where she spent four years under Theodore Leschetzky, studying the piano. The bills for tuition were paid by Gen. Thomas H. Hubbard.

FRUIT-EATING DOG A PET.

Nellie, a Well-Known Redingite, Has Hosts of Friends.

Reading, Pa.—Dogdom in this city probably has no more human-like member than Nellie, the beautiful carriage dog belonging to Mrs. Thomas Sigman, and the pet of all the friends and business men of this city who visit the office of Alderman Sandt, a brother of Mrs. Sigman. Nellie is part and parcel of the office, and, though gentle as a lamb, she takes good care of the personal effects of the alderman, if he should have occasion to leave the building for a short time.

Nellie is five years old, and her blood lines show that Reading has no finer specimen. She is a perfect carriage dog, and can follow any horse with her nose close to its heels.

One peculiarity of Nellie is that she absolutely refuses all canine company. Any person, however, who treats her kindly becomes her friend immediately, and children are her almost constant companions.

Having an army of friends in this city, she has learned to eat apples, grapes, peanuts, almonds, candy, ice cream and other delicacies, which are tendered to her by her good friends nearly every day.

When Nellie is in pain she has a peculiar way of begging for medicine, and takes the pain-killer gladly.

HERD OF 20,000 SHEEP.

Moved to Winter Range in Utah Under Heavily Armed Escort.

Denver.—Under the escort of a small-sized army of heavily armed men combined herds of 20,000 sheep are being driven from the summer ranges in Montrose county, Col., to the winter ranges in Utah.

In order to reach this latter section it was necessary to pass through that portion of the western slope heretofore used exclusively by cattlemen. Because of the alleged damage done by sheep to grazing lands, cattlemen strenuously object to their presence in any numbers whatsoever and frequently in the past attempts to drive across a cattle range have resulted in assaults on the herds, murders and the wholesale slaughter of sheep as a warning that the offenses must not be repeated.

This year the flock masters who summered their sheep in Montrose county combined for protection and are driving their animals in one big bunch in charge of 30 herders with 90 armed men as guards. This typical western caravan has so far met with no determined opposition.

The 20,000 woolies make an impressive sight, stretching in a solid mass almost as far as the eye can reach.

Around the Globe 31 Times.

Boston.—A bewildering record of miles sailed is that of Capt. Gerhard Eckhoff, master of the Dutch tank steamer La Hesbaye, who is now crossing the north Atlantic for the two hundred and thirty-sixth time, his tenth trip as master.

Here are some of Capt. Eckhoff's distinctions: He has circumnavigated the globe 31 times, 775,000 miles. Since starting out to sea at the age of 14 he has logged 1,000,000 miles, he says. He has never lost a man or a ship. He was never in a collision at sea, and he never came near anything like a serious accident. He is now on his one hundred and eighteenth round trip to Antwerp.

Pig Was Her Namesake.

Atlantic City, N. J.—Because Lewis Foote of Absecon killed "Jenny," a pet hog that had been named after her, Mrs. Jennie Lewis has sued Foote for \$160 damages.

Foote acknowledged having taken the pet to board, but testified that he had killed and marketed the porker to secure payment of the pig's board, which had not been paid by the woman owner. The jury returned a verdict of "no cause for action."

Onions, Onions, Onions.

600 bu. of Salzer's Red Globe Onion per acre at 80c a bu. brings \$480.00. That pays.

1 \$850.00 from 3 acres Salzer's Morning Star Cucumber is well worth taking along

640 bu. Salzer's 12 Podder Earliest and Best Pea sold in the green state at \$1.25 a bu. makes \$800.00 per acre. Such yields Salzer's pedigree vegetables stand for.

For 12c

and this notice the John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis., in order to gain 250,000 new customers during 1908, will mail you free their great plant and seed catalog together with

1 pkg. "Quick Quick" Carrot..... \$.10

1 pkg. Earliest Kiper Cabbage..... .10

1 pkg. Earliest Emerald Cucumber..... .15

1 pkg. La Crosse Market Lettuce..... .15

1 pkg. Early Diener Onion..... .10

1 pkg. Strawberry Muskmelon..... .15

1 pkg. Thirteen Day Radish..... .10

1,000 kernels gloriously beautiful flower seed..... .15

Total \$1.00

Above is sufficient seed to grow 35 bu. of rarest vegetables and thousands of brilliant flowers and all is mailed to you

POSTPAID FOR 12c.

or if you send 16c, we will add a package of Berliner Earliest Cauliflower. John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis. K. & W.

An All-Round Man.

William V. McManus, the new president of the Letter Carriers' association of New York, had been discussing the ideal letter carrier.

With a laugh he ended:

"Yes, the ideal letter carrier needs to be as all-round, as many-sided, as divinely gifted, as the man a Cincinnati suburbanite advertised for last month.

"The advertisement ran:

"Wanted—A man able to teach Spanish, water color painting, and the violin, and to look after the bull."

How It Was Done.

Mother (examining school report)—How did you come to have such good marks in arithmetic this week?

Tommy—Well, you see, it was this way: We had ten examples a day, and I got the teacher to help me to do five, and Eric Jones got her to help him on the other five. Then we swapped helps, see?—Harper's Bazar.

Important to Mothers.

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Wm. C. Little* in Use For Over 30 Years. The Kind You Have Always Bought.

His Elevating Occupation.

"You ought to be satisfied. Though a poet, you never starved in a garret."

"No; but getting the job of running the elevator was all that saved me."



This woman says Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved her life. Read her letter.

Mrs. T. C. Willadsen, of Manning, Iowa, writes to Mrs. Pinkham:

"I can truly say that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved my life, and I cannot express my gratitude to you in words. For years I suffered with the worst forms of female complaints, continually doctoring and spending lots of money for medicine without help. I wrote you for advice, followed it as directed, and took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and it has restored me to perfect health. Had it not been for you I should have been in my grave to-day. I wish every suffering woman would try it."

FACTS FOR SICK WOMEN.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, has been the standard remedy for female ills, and has positively cured thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, that bearing-down feeling, flatulency, indigestion, dizziness, or nervous prostration. Why don't you try it?

Mrs. Pinkham invites all sick women to write her for advice. She has guided thousands to health. Address, Lynn, Mass.

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THE ONLY Sanitary Durable WALL COATING

Is dry powder form, ready to use by mixing with cold water, full directions on every package, applied with an ordinary 7 inch flat brush.

Alabastine is packed in carefully sealed and properly labeled packages, in strong beautiful, rich, velvety tints, which DO NOT FADE or change color, also white, and packages will cover from 200 to 300 square feet of wall surface.

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