

WALKERTON INDEPENDENT

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Washington, D. C.—Blame for the collision of the New York Central and Michigan Central passenger trains at Porter, Ind., Feb. 27, in which 37 persons were killed and many injured, was placed by the interstate commerce commission bureau of safety directly upon Engleman Long and Fireman Block of the Michigan Central train. The report of the investigation conducted by W. P. Borland, bureau of safety chief, says the cause of the accident was Long's failure to observe and obey the signal governing Porter crossing. A contributing cause was the failure of Fireman Block properly to observe the home signal and his failure to give correct information to the engineer.

Warsaw—Counsel for Virgil Decker, the nineteen-year-old Atwood boy accused of the murder of his companion, Leroy Lovett, issued a repudiation of his recent confession. The confession said Decker attacked Lovett with a crowbar in a cabin on Tippecanoe river and placed the body on a railroad track to destroy the evidence. The repudiation, as issued, said: "I was promised by Mr. Stout, Mr. Jones and Mr. Merrill (Pennsylvania railroad detectives) that if I would confess to the murder of this boy I would be sentenced to prison for two years and then be a free man. I will say I am not guilty." The detectives denied promising the youth a light sentence.

Indianapolis.—The city of Indianapolis on December 31, 1920, contained 4434 square miles, its maximum length east and west was 9.1 miles and its maximum width north and south was 10.8 miles, according to the annual report of F. C. Lingenfelter, city civil engineer, which was filed with the board of public works. The report set out the amount of street and alley paving and other public improvements. Out of a total of 692 miles of dedicated streets in the city, said the report, there are 292.46 miles of pavement.

Indianapolis.—Delegates to the conference at Chicago, April 6, which is either to be held by the committee of 17 for the co-operative marketing of grain on a national scale, were selected at a meeting of representatives of Indiana farmers' organizations here. Seven delegates were selected, three from the Indiana Federation of Farmers' associations, two from the Indiana Farmers' Grain Dealers' association, one from the Indiana State Grange and one from other organizations.

Salem.—Purdue university has bought a farm of 80 acres in Washington county, which will be operated under the direct supervision of the agricultural department as a model farm for the particular benefit of farmers of southern Indiana. The project, which includes the remodeling of the farm home, erection of modern farm buildings and intensive fertilization and cultivation of the soil, is being financed by two philanthropists of Chicago.

Rushville.—Two much talk about the gymnasium and not enough about classrooms in the proposed new \$90,000 high school building at Milroy, caused the measure to be defeated, when the farmers of the township declared that they were for education first and basketball second. The farmers in the township voted 52 to 15 against the new building, which was intended to contain a large gymnasium for basketball purposes.

Alexandria.—Alexandria is making a bid for the headquarters of a new military band, to be organized among musicians of Alexandria, Summitville, Rigdon and Gaston. More than 15 musicians in Alexandria will join. Equipment for the band will be provided by the government. During the annual encampment this summer at Camp Knox the band will have two weeks' service.

Leavenworth.—The wearing of scanty attire in public has been prohibited in the Ohio River village of Leavenworth by an ordinance adopted by the town board. Any person more than fourteen years of age who appears on the street attired in garments which exposes the arms, shoulders or legs is to be fined, under the terms of the ordinance, from \$5 to \$25.

Lafayette.—An outstanding piece of work has been completed here in the interest of bird protection. Three thousand three hundred and eighty-four boys and girls have signed a pledge not to kill birds, frighten them or in any way disturb or harm their nests, and to do all they can to keep others from doing so.

Elihart.—Forty automobiles were destroyed in a fire at the Loser garage here. The loss on the machines and building was placed at \$75,000.

Newcastle.—Churches of Newcastle, in a vote taken by ballot at services recently on the question of Sunday motion picture shows, returned an overwhelming majority against them. One thousand seven hundred and eighty-one persons opposed and sixty-one were in favor of the entertainment on the Sabbath.

Terre Haute.—The Terre Haute school board has bought 50 lots in the Denning addition, on the east side of the city, for the purpose of erecting a new high school. The tract cost \$28,500.



"ENGAGED!"

Suspense—Dr. John Michelson, just beginning his career, becomes resident physician and companion of Homer Sidney at Hartley house. Mr. Sidney is an American, a semi-stray, oil and rich and very drowsy. Mrs. Sidney is a Spanish woman, drowsy and reticent. Jed the butler, acts like a privileged member of the family. Hartley house is a fine old isolated country place, with a murder story, a haunted pool and many watch dogs, and an atmosphere of mystery. The "haunted pool" is where Richard Dobson, son of a former owner of Hartley house, had killed his brother, Arthur Dobson. Jed begins operations by locking the doctor out of his room the very next night. Doctor John fixed a date so he can't be locked in. He meets Isobel, daughter of the house and falls in love at first sight. In the night he finds the butler drunk and bleeding Mrs. Sidney by the wrist. He saves her. Mrs. Sidney explains John buys a revolver.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

The gardener's name was Williamson. He had been on the place almost from the time of Mr. Sidney's purchase of it. He was attached to it, proud of his work and fond of it and its results. He had a neat little cottage beyond the gardens. His wife was very pleasant and thought too much of my services. Williamson himself was a fine man, and I am interested in gardening. Consequently, having to visit the family every day or every other day, I formed a habit of talking with him.

When, by chance, I spoke of the ghost story to Williamson, and with no more purpose than I ever had had in these inquiries, I noticed that he was a bit embarrassed.

"I take no stock in the stories about the pool," he said. "I'd just as lief pass it at midnight as midday—almost."

"Be honest, Williamson," I suggested laughingly.

"Almost, I said," he replied. "But I did see something at the pool."

He was a straightforward, unimaginative sort of man. I was sure he was not about to indulge in romance.

"I know something of these stories," he said. "I have not gossiped much about—I was coming from town late—after midnight. It was the second year of our being here. It was in the fall or late summer—I do not remember—when along the road by the pool, I saw the figure of a man standing by the edge of the river. It was light enough for me to see that the figure was leaning on a stick or cane. I stopped and was going to call out, but for some reason—I don't know just why—I didn't. The figure did not move. I began to feel creepy and went on as gently as I could. Fifty feet farther, I heard a rustling in the brush and I thought I saw a face. I couldn't be sure, but I thought I did. I know I heard a rustling. When I got out in the open, I ran the rest of the way home on the turf."

"There was nothing very alarming about that," I suggested. "My romance needed more substance. You saw a man and heard a noise."

"There was nothing in seeing a man and hearing a noise," said Williamson. "It was the effect."

"That was due to the hour and the place."

"No. I'm not superstitious. I was not thinking of the place. The man on the bank was different from a man, I could not see why. I didn't think he was scared—at first. I became scared as I looked at him. He did not move. He did not seem to be alive. When I felt shivers starting up and down my back, I knew I was scared. Then when I heard the rustling, I went home as quickly and quietly as I could."

CHAPTER III.

Jed certainly was the most significant disagreeable fact in the house, and his influence the most significant malignancy. He had been sobered by the discovery of his attack upon Mrs. Sidney, but as he began to recover from his discomfiture, and as the sense of caution began to lessen, he again asserted, or suggested, control, particularly when he was drunk. He never allowed Mr. Sidney to know this. In their strange association at Horatian wine feasts, Jed was tactful, respectful, considerate and jovial.

To Mrs. Sidney he was at time courteous and thoughtful, at other times disrespectful or even brutal. Sometimes he seemed to fight himself. When I saw that he was again beginning to show disrespect for her, I was for putting an end to it. Mrs. Sidney was horrified when I said that Jed could be brought to terms. She held up her hands.

"No, no," she said. "Not in any event! Never, please speak to Mr. Sidney. Please never think of it. Jed is invaluable to Mr. Sidney. He is not so disconcerting to me as you might think. He is gruff, and drinking does not make him better, but it is Mr. Sidney's whim that he should drink. It would be unjust—not you see it would be unjust—to make a point against him of behavior that Mr. Sidney causes. Please never mention it."

She was very much in earnest and was not satisfied until she had my promise that I never would speak to Mr. Sidney of Jed until I had her consent. She then showed relief, and I felt more distressed. Jed had some hold on this resolute lady that I should have liked to break.

Jed's attitude toward me was a thing to drive a person who cared what it was. I did not. He

am not hesitating. I hope I do not seem to be, but I know—I suspect—that your decision is sudden."

"Isobel's affection for us is greater than her demand for independence," said Mrs. Sidney. "If she knows that I asked you to consent to this announcement, she will think of you as a proved friend."

I had suggested all the precautions that were reasonable. "You certainly may make any use of me you want to," I said. She thanked me and said good night.

Isobel's view of our engagement was purely comic. She may have had a second of spiritual revolt, but comedy and consideration for her mother asserted themselves. Mrs. Sidney, when she told Isobel of the engagement, had me present. The mother was really embarrassed, almost flustered, but she was determined. Isobel was greatly annoyed.

It may be imagined that I was not hero, I might better have been a wax figure taken from a display window. I fell like one, a thing with a wax smile and no animation.

"It is merely precautionary," said Mrs. Sidney uneasily. "It is quite impossible to explain. You will have to accept my judgment, Isobel. Dr. John—

an odd halfway house toward intimacy she reached and stopped at—Dr. John has been kind enough to do as I asked him. I need and want the support of my children in what I am doing."

I felt a touch of emotion at that. Unconsciously, intent upon her main point, she had included me at the fireside and had spoken of her "children."

"Anything you do or have done is all right, mother," said Isobel, recovering from her sense of humor. "Dr.—John—will not be unhappy—I am sure—will you, doctor? And I—mother—I'll get an advantage of you in this—see if I don't."

"You mustn't try to, Isobel," said Mrs. Sidney anxiously. "I am doing the best I can."

Later in the evening I saw Isobel, finding her alone in the library, where she was reading. I went in to get a book before going to bed. She was by a lamp near the fireplace, and she looked very beautiful.

"I want to talk to you," she said when she saw me. "Do you know the explanation of this?"

"No," I said.

"You are not quite honest," she said. "A man engaged to a girl he never asked to marry him might suspect that something was out of the ordinary."

"Of course, something is extraordinary," I said. "Do you know what it is?"

"No, I don't," she said. "Why don't you sit down?"

With a soft witchery of femininity she purred and glorified the room but she was peremptory. I was not sulky, but I felt defiant.

"Because I don't want to sit down," I said.

Isobel smiled indulgently at me.

"Oh, s—down, Dr. John," she said.

"I want to talk to you. We are engaged, know, and engaged people ought

to have a talk after the event."

"You understand how this happened," I suggested.

"I do," she said. "My mother is frightened. Jed has been trying to marry me."

"What can give him the privilege of such insolence?" I exclaimed.

"I imagine he is enamored," she said serenely. "It may seem impossible to you."

"Has this man approached you directly?" I asked.

"He has been gallant, amorous, suggestive, tender, soulful, aggressive, pleading, threatening, subservient and—I think that is all—but only in manner."

"I don't understand it," I said helplessly.

"Neither do I," she said. "And I know just enough to know that I shall not understand it. I do not like to find a Romeo among the servants, but I have learned to accept some strange conditions here—among them you."

"Don't disturb yourself about me," I said.

A good deal of my hurt pride must have found expression in that remark.

"I am unjust," she said. "I know that you are doing what my mother wants done and that you are not considering yourself. I shall be reasonable. I want to make my mother's life as pleasant as it can be made. I cannot understand everything that she needs of me, but I know that you have done everything that you could do for her. I do not want to seem inconsistent."

"I'd like to protect you and your mother," I said.

"We are indebted," said Isobel, with a chill and unkind restraint. Then she smiled and said:

"Good night, doctor. If I am inconsiderate at any time, put it down to a naturally bad temper."

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Jed had taken a small shotgun and said that he was going after rabbits, which were unusually numerous and threatened to be damaging to the young brush about the place. It was an October afternoon with a warm sun. An hour or two after Jed had gone, I went out for a walk, going down by the pool.

I was in the brush for fifteen minutes, and it happened that while I was there I saw from a little prominence the figure of Jed on ahead with his shotgun. He was some distance away, but I could see that he was going stealthily from tree to tree in an odd fashion for one hunting for rabbits. It was as if he were stalking something rather than trying to kick rabbits up out of the brush.

I went on toward the pool. Once again I saw Jed ahead of me. I came out on the path and went on to the river bank, where I sat down.

Whenever I saw a piece of drift in the pool and watched its movements, I thought of the body of the slain brother. It had been whirled out into the current and had been carried downstream. On the bank had been found a few torn bits of clothing—the sleeve of a coat, a collar spotted with blood, a necktie and a piece of a white shirt.

"Not a soul," I said, "—except Miss Sidney."

I would not cause pain," said Mrs. Sidney. "Are you sure there is no one?"

"Mrs. Sidney," I said, "you are the only lady who ever has given me a thought since I knew my mother. I am merely wondering what Miss Sidney will think of me in such a role. Will she understand why I take it? I

shot from the nearby thickets, and a bullet hit within two feet of where I was sitting, knocking off the bark of a tree. The report was not that of a small shotgun such as Jed had carried. It was the report of a rifle or pistol.

The chipped bark showed that a bullet, not shot, had hit the tree, and I was not pleased, not even looking around, but I was thinking rapidly. A subconscious protective idea formed almost instantly, and when the next moment another shot came from behind me, I fell forward on my face, rolled a couple of feet to a bush, turned my face in the direction from which the shot came, got out my pistol and lay still.

It likely was a pistol or a revolver, and that was why he had missed me. I was stupefied for an instant, and I did not jump or start. I was motionless, not even looking around, but I was thinking rapidly. A subconscious protective idea formed almost instantly, and when the next moment another shot came from behind me, I fell forward on my face, rolled a couple of feet to a bush, turned my face in the direction from which the shot came, got out my pistol and lay still.

After a minute or two which seemed a very long time, Jed's face came in view in the brush. He looked malevolent but seemed undetermined and cautious. I think he was uncertain whether to leave my body where it lay and have it discovered, or throw it into the river and have my disappearance

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