

THE BANK MYSTERY.

I've come, judge, to ask if you'll let me tell you what no one on earth don't know but me, 'bout that bank mystery.

Yes, thank you, I will sit down. A fire feels good on a night like this. 'Tain't often such as I have a chance at this kind of comfort and luxury.

What do I know about the bank mystery? Land sakes, judge, time they opened the bank that day ten years ago and found the bank vault broke into and the safe blown up and not a dollar gone, I could have told it all. The people of Tiverton ain't done talking and wondering 'bout it yet, and there ain't never no one livin' as could tell what it all meant but me.

I brought some papers—here they are, judge—where it's all written down and I can swear to it if you like. I don't want them never used, though, unless I die and something comes up as would make it best for my family to know, though there's this in it I'd rather die than have 'em know. If it's all the same to you, judge, I'd like to tell it to you. Seems like I'd get rid of a load and would be happier and die easier feelin' I'd spoken it all out to one livin' human.

You'd be glad to listen? That's good of you. I knowed you was a kind man and a just one; that's why I come to you. No, thank you, I don't smoke; I put all that money away for my wife and children.

Do you hear that storm? Outside seems like all the evil powers was let loose. You can't judge 'bout it here. It comes kind of muffled like through those thick curtains and it don't shake this great house like it does some.

It's this kind of night that makes men huddle together, judge, and plan how to get rich and have fine things such as the likes of you. I've been through it all; I know. I've felt as if I had a good right to 'em as anyone and I was bound to have 'em too. I warn't brought up to no trade nor nothin' and fair means seemin' to fail, I took to the other.

Yes, judge, I started out in life a thief and a robber. I prospered fairly in a small way and no one didn't catch up with me for some time. Then I joined a gang in for everything. Lord, but it was fascinating! It was like drink; I couldn't give it up and I couldn't get enough of it. I was in prison and out then, the old story, till I married and begun to have little ones.

Then, Lord knows what helped me—something did—and for the sake of my wife and children, I broke loose from everything and came here, where no one didn't know me, to start over again. I had some money and opened the restaurant just opposite the bank.

Long as I didn't read the papers I got on well; but let me see them and I'd hunt through 'em for the robberies, and I'd be crazy, plumb crazy for a while, aching to be in it all again. Seem 'bout my old pals gettin' in trouble didn't make no difference.

Time come, though, when I begun to enjoy life differently, and to feel myself more respectable. The love for the old life begun ter go till I could read about it without gettin' all fired up. I thought then I was all right.

Then they come here, part of the gang I'd belonged to. First I knowed of it was seein' 'em in the restaurant. I spioned they warn't here for no good and it most took my breath away. They knowed me quick enough, too, and nothin' wouldn't do but I must join 'em. I was the very man they wanted. I could help 'em and I was bound to 'em. 'Twas the biggest thing they'd undertaken yet, the bank. They'd come on to examine the situation, knowing that Mr. Durkee, the new mill owner would make a big payment soon and the money for it would be in the bank here. If there weren't anything else, that would be a big haul, worth havin' and me bein' here decided 'em.

I do think the devil brought all his friends and relations with him that night to tempt me. I forgot how to sleep and just couldn't stay in bed. I wonder I warn't in tatters by mornin', with the devil tuggin' at me as he did and tryin' to keep me out of the room where my sleepin' children lay. Lord, it makes me creep and perspire all over now to think of it.

Yer see them bank people come over to my place for lunch, best part of the time, and they all knowed my little people, and the mill people knowed 'em, too. My oldest boy worked in the mill and they'd been as kind as could be when he's sick. Christmas time they's good to him, too, and there warn't a bank officer but what had remembered my little people, even the watchman. Seemed like robbing my own people somehow. I's bound not ter inform on the gang, and they's bound not ter rob their bank, but I cursed 'em in my heart for comin' just when I was gettin' rid of the old life for good and all. 'Twas awful!

Well, judge, you know how them rooms over the bank was rented to start a new daily paper. I made 'em swear solemn as my name warn't to appear nowhere. I'd plan it all out and give 'em points and be on hand at the last, but I had to be cautious.

They found out when the money was to be paid and 'greed on the night before for the robbery. I had all mapped out for 'em where and how they were to loosen up the boards of the floor in their room above, so we could break through and lower ourselves into the vault when the time came. Than you see we'd only have the sale to get into and the great iron door between us and the watchman.

Everything was ready, and we was pretty sure the money was paid.

Do you hear that storm now, judge? 'Twas like that ten years ago tonight, dark as Egypt, with the rain and wind a perfect hurricane; a terrible night; the kind of night for any sort of crime. The men chuckled to themselves. 'Twas a fortune sure this time, and they'd all be on the way to comfort and safety before day. I ain't never seen 'em so excited. Nothin' hadn't gone wrong and nothin' couldn't now.

We had sentinels stationed round to give the alarm, but there wasn't much danger on a night like that.

We had planned so as to have the door of the safe ready to blow open when the watchman went down cellar to see to his fires. I knowed time of night he did so, seein' him often from my house across the way through the window of the bank, but to make sure we stationed a man where he could give the signal at the proper time. With the watchman downstairs and we shut in the vault, with solid masonry below us, 'twarn't in the range of possibilities for no human to hear us.

'Twas planned that when we broke through the ceiling me and one of the others was to go down first with the lanterns and tools and get the door ready for Jim Groogan, the leader of the gang, to come down and use the dynamite and be on hand to take out the money.

Lord, but it was just the night for such a piece of work, and after I had examined to see if all was safe, knowing the dangers better than the others, we broke through the floor and lowered the ladder, and there we was—right in the vault. 'Twas well for me I'd hit it right, for my life warn't worth much if any o' my plannin' failed to work.

Tom Doolan in a hurry went down first and when I was half way down he started back, saying in a hoarse kind of whisper: 'Who called me?'

'No one, you fool,' said Jim.

'Then,' he said, and he ran past me on the ladder, 'someone is down there. Twit I heard someone say: 'Go back, go back.' We'll gag him,' said Jim, and me and him went down and turned our lanterns round lookin' everywhere, but there warn't no one there.

'What's the matter with the fool?' growled Jim, and went back and tried to send him down again, but he just wouldn't go, so Jim cursed him and come himself, and he and me begun to get the safe door ready to blow up.

That's a thing that takes time and care, judge, but we went at it with a will, and never a word. It was so still you could almost hear your heart beat, when all of a sudden came a smothered cry, loud and clear, like a woman's. We stopped work and looked at each other, Jim's face white and scared.

'Lord, what was that?' he said.

'I often hears them on the street like that,' I said.

'That warn't on the street; it sounded close by,' said Jim. 'We couldn't hear nothin' outside in this place.'

'Nonsense,' I said, 'don't you make a fool of yourself, too, and spoil it, and I went to work again.'

I could see his hand tremble for a while and then got steady again.

'That must have come through the room upstairs,' he said presently. 'Queer, though, it sounded so close.'

Then we worked on and there warn't nothing more to be heard. Rest of the gang might all have been dead men for all the sound they made and we didn't say nothing, and so the night went on.

At last we had it all ready and were only waiting for the signal to blow it up and then—money enough to make us all rich. 'Tain't such as you can realize the excitement and the strain of such a moment. To know it's all there, ready, and then to have to wait! It's easier walkin' over red hot coals. It's all right to go on and work, but to stay still and only breathe and listen gives a man the shivers.

Presently Jim caught my arm.

'Say, I thought I heard voices, did you?' he whispered.

'The men upstairs,' I said.

'Sounded down here. Have your pistol ready.'

I took my lantern and went round the vault again carefully, and then held it up to examine the walls. Then I shook my head. There warn't no way we could hear no one.

'It's the queerest place I ever was in,' said Jim, 'and by Jove I'll be glad when we are out of it. Why don't that signal come? Suppose there's any hitch? I swear I hear voices again.'

Just then came the signal and Jim began to apply the dynamite, but his hands trembled so and his eyes looked so wild and excited, his own wife wouldn't know him.

'The money, the money,' he whispered, 'we must have it now.'

We got out of the way just in time and then out came the door.

'The inside door, quick,' said Jim, but the explosion had made that fall inside and we just could lift it out.

'Have the bag ready,' said Jim, as he leaned forward to haul out the great piles of bank notes and silver we could see by the light of the lanterns.

'Hands off, or you are a dead man.'

It was a voice that would most have waked the dead. I dropped my bag and Jim drew back his hand and caught hold of me with a grip like iron, and we began to go slowly back to the ladder.

'The combination is all right; we have them now; they can't escape us.'

We were half way up the ladder when we heard the click, click of the lock, and as we drew the ladder after us we could hear the rasping of the hinges of the iron door.

'Fly, fly for your lives; we are discovered,' said Jim, as he went around to warn the men; and in the darkness and the wind they went away and I ain't never seen none of 'em since. I heard, though, as when they found there warn't no one there and the bank people didn't know nothin' 'bout it till the next morning, they just believed the bank was haunted, sure.

Do I know what it was, judge? There ain't no one else as does know, that's sure. 'Tain't much, after all.

Yer see, playin' 'round with my little ones, I found as I could make 'em hear all kinds of noises anywhere I wanted, and people cryin' and laughin'. It was fun for them and I often done it; ventriloquizin', I believe you call it; but that night's the last time. Yer see, none of the gang didn't

know 'bout that, and I don't keer ever to have 'em know it now. It saved the bank without my informin', and that's all I care for.

Oh, no, judge, the bank don't owe me nothin'. You'll take care of the papers? Thank you. I'm obliged to you for listenin', too. It kind of makes me feel easier.

No, no, thank you, I won't stay and take no more of your time. Don't get up; I can find my way out.

What's that you say, judge? You honor and respect me—me—? And the bank—land, judge, 'twarn't me; 'twas my wife and children saved the bank, and I'm proud of 'em, judge. Good night—Philadelphia Times.

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BURIED IN THE DEBRIS.

Strange Story of the Indian Troy, a Dead Old City.

At last the ruins of the Indian Troy, deeply buried in the debris of over twenty-two centuries, are likely soon to see the light. Pataliputra, the Palibothra of the Greeks, the 'city of sweet-scented flowers,' so famous in ancient Indian legend and romance, is perhaps most widely known as the capital of Asoka the greatest of Indian emperors and most lavish devotees the world has ever seen. He covered his mighty kingdom, from Afghanistan to the Decan, from Nepal to Gujarat, with countless Buddhist monuments and buildings of vast size. His stupendous stupas or mounds of solid masonry to enshrine Buddha's relics or to mark some sacred spot are found all over India and are almost like Egyptian pyramids in size. His colossal edict pillars, single shafts of stone over forty feet in length and beautifully polished and sculptured, still excite the admiration and wonder of all who see them.

How magnificent, then, must have been the capital of this great Hindoo king, who was the ally of the Greek kings. Antiochus of Syria; Ptolemy of Egypt; Antigonus of Macedon; Magnus of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epirus! It was already a splendid city in the fourth century B. C. in the time of his grandfather, Chandragupta, the Greek sanderottus, as we learn from the glowing descriptions of Megasthenes, the ambassador of the successor of Alexander the Great. At that time the buildings were all of wood, like the palaces and temples of Burmah in the present day. It is a matter of history, however, how Asoka found this



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capital of wood and left it stone. But before the dawn of our era this great city had decayed with the fall of Asoka's dynasty and the smaller succeeding dynasties and the transfer of capital elsewhere. In 400 A. D. the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hian reported that it lay deserted and in ruins. Since the Mohammedan invasion in the twelfth century A. D. the very site of this city was forgotten. It was known to be somewhere near the modern town of Patna, in Bengal, but most of the experts and others who had deliberately searched for it believed that it had been entirely washed away by the Ganges. Then it will be remembered that Surgeon Maj. Waddell, in 1892, during a flying visit to Patna, found that the leading landmarks of Asoka's capital still existed.

He found several sculptured stones and images of the Asoka epoch lying on the surface or built into houses or walls, and these, together with the position of the old mounds, many of which still retain their ancient names, enabled him to fix with certainty the limits of Asoka's citadel, and also to indicate roughly the possible sites of particular buildings for exploratory excavations, without which of course, no detailed identifications could be decisively attended. Unfortunately, most of the likely mounds now contain Mohammedan graves, for the Mohammedan invaders were wont to seize the highest mounds for their residences and burial grounds, and for centuries they have used these ruins as a quarry for their building material.

Still, a beginning has now been made, and already at Patna, where five years ago no stones of the Asoka period were suspected to be, there may now be seen pieces of the well-known stone posts, the so-called Asoka railings, with their quaintly figured medallion-like bosses, by which Asoka perpetuated in stone the original wooden fences which surrounded the sacred Buddhist spots. And close by one may see, about twelve feet below the present surface, parts of the wooden walls of Palibothra, with their marvelously well-preserved Sal timber over twenty centuries old.—Calcutta Englishman.

GLADSTONE AT OXFORD.

How the Grand Old Man's Life was Spent at the University.

I have read quite lately that Mr. Gladstone himself was rather disposed to underrate the amount of interest which he took while at Oxford in out-of-door pursuits. One or two of his surviving contemporaries may have been heard to declare that Gladstone held as good a place among the Oxford athletes of his time as he did among the hard working students. It is possible enough that in later days the mind of the great statesman and the great student may have lost its memory of the physical exercises which were less a passion of his temperament and his nature than the working of the intellect and the development of the brain. One can only say that it is hard to believe in Mr. Gladstone turning his attention to anything physical or intellectual without becoming more or less successful in the attempt.

It is a curious fact that when his office of president of the Oxford Union came to an end he was succeeded by his friend, afterward Cardinal Manning. It is a curious fact, too, not unworthy of record, that among the friendships which he made at Oxford was that of Mr. Martin Farquhar Tupper. The general public now has lost all memory of Mr. Tupper. Tupper was, however, a man well known in his day. He was the author of a book called 'Proverbial Philosophy,' a book which probably had at one time a larger circulation than any of the novels of Dickens and Thackeray.

eray, or the writings of Carlyle, or even the essays of Lord Macaulay. It was a book composed altogether of gentle platitudes, each platitude carrying with it a well-meaning moral purpose. The genial platitudes ceased to interest after a time, and Tupper faded out of the minds of even the dullest among us. I remember a friend telling me, many years ago, that he had just come from a literary party where he had been sitting between two extremes of poetry—between Alfred Tennyson on the one hand and Martin Tupper on the other. Tupper first adored Gladstone and wrote poems to him, then for a while he turned against him, and afterward went back to his first love. Gladstone was always kind to Tupper, invited him to the house, always read and answered his letters (which must have been terribly boring work) and proved that he has never forgotten his old associates at the university.—Justifi McCarthy in the Outlook.

HEALTH AND HARD MUSCLES.

If John Simpson were not a blacksmith we might not have occasion to allude to him at the very outset of this writing. But he is a blacksmith and will thus serve an important purpose; that, too, without having to put on his leather apron to do it.

And he will do it by standing in front of his forge for five minutes while we all take a look at him. He is a strong and robust man, as Mr. Dicken's Joe Gargery was—as all blacksmiths ought to be. Ought to be, I say. But are they?—as a matter of fact? No, they are not—not by many a length of nail rod.

Now it is somehow a common notion that all men who work hard, especially amid rough surroundings and in the fresh air, are apt to be vigorous, healthy fellows; they are supposed to joke at doctors, to have no use for apothecaries, and even to regard undertakers as the necessity of a distant future. Is this view a true view? Are health and hard muscles always found together? Take your time to think. Meanwhile we will hear what Mr. Simpson himself says:—

'Up to the spring of 1885,' he writes in a letter dated May 5th, 1893, 'I was strong as most men—perhaps stronger than most. Then I began to suffer from illness. My vitals and I had a falling out. After every meal I had great pain and fullness at the chest. Then I got into such a condition that I had these nearly all the while. I tried to avoid them by eating nothing but light food, but the result was just the same. I think a morsel of bread would have hurt me almost as much as a round of beef. Then I began to lose weight and had all I could do to keep up with my work. The doctor gave me medicine but I got no help from it.'

'I was wondering how this would end when I heard of Mather Seigel's Curative Syrup and bought a bottle of it from Mr. James Crossley, the grocer at Mile Walk. The effect was speedy. It appeared to go straight to the right spot, and it wasn't long before I was able to eat without any pain to follow. Then my strength and flesh gradually came back, and ever since I have done my work as easily as I did before the disease, whatever it was, overtook me. (Signed) John Simpson, Cliviger, near Burnley.'

New, about that health and hard muscle question that I put to the readers; what's the answer? Why, of course the answer is what any intelligent man would make who thinks with his eyes open. No; health and hard muscles are not always found together. But let us look sharp and commit no errors. The facts run this way: While a man cannot grow without a certain degree of health, it is also true that a notable amount of muscular power is consistent with both organic and functional trouble of the stomach, liver, kidneys, or heart. A man may be able to lift 500 pounds, and drop dead within a minute after he does it.

Sailors, farmers, miners, drivers of trains, 'busses, &c., outdoor laborers of different sorts (especially after reaching mid life), nearly all fall victims to rheumatism, nervous debility, or dyspepsia. Yes, and do hard work for years just the same.

I said 'or' dyspepsia. Leave out the 'or' and say dyspepsia—dyspepsia only—and you have struck bottom. This produces all the other maladies; they are merely results and symptoms of it. There's no keeping clear of it by running off to sea, working on a farm, or diving down into a mine. No matter where you go or what you do, indoors or out, clerking in the Bank of England, or driving the locomotive of the Scotch Express—dyspepsia will get hold of you if you give it a chance. And most men do that as it they were as eager to be ill as they are to be rich. Which reminds me to tell you in a subsequent article how to avoid dyspepsia. For this time I can only speak of how to cure it. Imitate John Simpson's example. Do what he did. And remember that stalwart men (all unconscious) often stand nearer death, than do the feeble women whom they pity.

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