

A MOCK FUNERAL

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN

John Wickersham lived on the Pacific coast. John was a mining wreck. There are inventive wrecks, literary wrecks, artistic wrecks and many other kinds of wrecks. In other words, he had spent two-thirds of his life taking enormous risks as to loss of time, to say nothing of other detriments, seeking a fortune in holes in the ground. Finally, discouraged, he settled down on a small piece of ground with his wife and children and tried to make a living for himself and them in a work he knew nothing about, farming.

Katie was John's little daughter. She loved the big ocean near which she lived and spent as much of her time as could be spared in looking out upon it from the heights or running about on the beach. She lived on a big bay that afforded a tolerable harbor, though it was not much used by ships. However, there was a necessity for a custom house, where an old man dosed the quiet hours away. He was not there for business, for there was no business for him to do. He was there to watch, and the way he watched was by dosing.

One morning Katie went to the shore just to have a look at the broad expanse that seemed to her as big as the heavens above. She saw a ship approaching, and a ship even far out at sea was to her as agreeable a sight as a gull flying in the sky. The vessel was so near that she could see persons on her deck. While the child looked an anchor was let go, and she could hear the chains rattling in the heavy pipes. Then a boat put off to the shore and pointed for the custom house. It remained there a short while, then pulled back to the ship.

Presently a box, oblong in shape, was lowered into the boat, while those aboard the vessel stood with heads uncovered. Katie understood this to be the removal of a corpse and looked on, deeply impressed. And it occurred to her that when the boat had gone to the custom house it was to request permission to bury a body on the shore.

The boat dashed in the sunlight, and the boat drew near a point on the beach almost directly below where Katie was. There was but little surf, the boat's nose grated on the bank, and four sailors removed the box from the boat and carried it to the crest of a hill, where they dug a grave. A few persons from the little hamlet near by, pleased at an opportunity to see some thing doing, even if it were only a funeral, stood by gazing. Katie, who remained in her own position, saw the box lowered in the grave, a few words spoken by one of the burial party, the earth replaced, a wooden headboard was set up, and all were pulled back to the ship.

Katie went home and at dinner told her parents what she had seen. John Wickersham listened to her recital, but made no comment on it. Having finished his dinner, he went out to resume his work, and when he returned to supper he was more taciturn even than at dinner. As soon as it was dark he took up a spade and said to his wife:

"My dear, I'm going to the shore."

"What on earth are you going to the shore for?"

"I'm going to dig up that corpse that was buried today."

"You're not going to do any such thing. What you going to do that for?"

"There's gold in that grave."

"Oh, Lord! You've been digging holes for gold for twenty years, and it's made you crazy on the subject. For heaven's sake do get the idea out of your head."

"Listen to me, Susan. Those sailors didn't bury a corpse; they buried gold. They're smugglers. Old Grant, the collector, is being hoodwinked all the while. They asked permission to bury a corpse and either tonight or some night soon they'll take it up, run it into market and make a big profit out of it swindling the government out of its duty."

The poor woman groaned, and her husband went out into the darkness, going to the hill his daughter had described. It was a lonely spot, and he had no great fear of being interrupted by any one passing. He dug down to the box, lifted it out, and his suspicions were confirmed by its lightness. He therefore carried it without opening it to his home and placed it on a table. His wife stood by in agony, supposing that her husband had lost his reason. But John, seizing a screwdriver, removed one screw after another and took off the lid.

He did not find a corpse, as his wife expected, but some overlying paper. Removing this, he came to a number of pasteboard boxes. Taking off the cover of one, he displayed a quantity of rare lace. Every one of the boxes contained the same kind of goods. He looked at his wife and saw her gazing on the lace in wonder.

"Katie," called the father, "come here." Katie came, and he added: "That's the corpse you saw buried this morning. It's a live enough corpse to give us a lift. I always said I'd find gold in a hole, and I have. But the luck came through Katie."

John Wickersham had captured goods worth \$40,000, and, using Katie's description of the ship, he enabled the commander of a revenue cutter to capture her, and other buried articles were unearthed at several different points. John's reward for all this was sufficient to make him and his family comfortable for the rest of their lives.

They Convinced Him.

There was a Russian writer who approved of so many things in connection with the management of his native country that he got himself into serious trouble with the authorities. He persevered in pointing out their defects, and at last they got so exasperated that they decided to hang him, and he was duly sentenced to death by one of the governors he had criticized.

Three times they tried to hang him and three times the rope broke. The worried hangman postponed the execution while he went to talk things over with the governor.

"What did he say when the rope broke the third time?" asked the governor.

"He said that it was just what might be expected in Russia," replied the hangman—"that we couldn't even hang a man properly."

The enraged governor turned in a fury to the hangman. "Convince him that he is wrong!" he shouted.

So the hangman went back to the condemned man and convinced him.

Sailing Wheelbarrows.

The sailing wheelbarrows of China are a sight to delight the eyes of an old salt stranded inland, particularly in the Shensi district, where mile long processions of these queer vehicles may be met with. Wheelbarrow transportation would be almost impossible in this district, due to the blown sand, were it not for the ingeniously devised sails. Night and day for months at a stretch without ceasing the wind blows steadily from west to east at an average velocity of more than fifteen miles an hour. Luckily this chance to be the direction of the country's produce transportation, so that the heaviest laden of the barrow craft are able to "make port" with a fair wind. A wind "dead-a-stern" however, is by no means absolutely necessary for by ingeniously contrived supports on the sides of the barrows the sails may be set to take advantage of almost every slant of breeze.—Popular Mechanics.

Daudet's Romance.

The novelist, Alphonse Daudet, had determined to remain a bachelor, because he was afraid that if he made a wrong step in marriage he might dull his imagination. He has given expression to his fear in the "Femmes d'Artistes" and more particularly in the tale "Madame Hourdelle," with which the volume opens. But, on being introduced to Mlle. Julie Allard, who loved literature and was herself a charming writer and critic, his fear was removed. The union proved a very happy one, and the picture of the two at work is an attractive bit of biography.

Once, it is related, he had a sentimental and dramatic scene with his wife, concerning which he remarked: "This seems, my dear, like a chapter that has slipped out of a novel."

"It is more likely, Alphonse," was the reply, "to form a chapter that will slip into one!"

Teeth of the Muskellunge.

Along toward the middle of July a curious thing happens to the muskellunge. His teeth fall out. A sort of piscatorial Riggs' disease seems to attack him. Naturally, he loses flesh in the toothless season, and his inability to enjoy any of the good things that swim about him increases the savagery of his temper.

With the coming of September he has cut an entire new set of teeth, and they are like knife blades set up on edge in his jaws. Then he takes on new vigor, voraciousness and aggressiveness, with the memory of weeks of pent-up fury and unappetized appetite to avenge. And then comes the angler's best opportunity with him.—Detroit Free Press.

Ferry Tolls on the Tigris.

At one ferry on the Tigris river the toll is as follows: For a poor Arab, 2 cents; for a prosperous Arab, 4 cents; for a soldier, 10 cents; for a pilgrim, 20 cents; for a European, 80 cents. The scale of prices for nearly everything along the way is similar. But many of the Arabs are so poor that they prefer to swim across in the ancient manner. They bind several old gourds together and then, sitting upon them, paddle their way along.—Christian Herald.

Looking Ahead.

"I hear your daughter married against your wishes. Why didn't you stop the match?"

"Well, it wasn't seriously against my wishes. I just want to be able to say I told her so if anything goes wrong."—Pittsburgh Post.

Home Campaign.

"Our stenographer is a wise one."

"How now?"

"While the other girls were fooling around at the seashore getting themselves engaged to ribbon clerks she remained on the job and got affianced to the boss."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Not What Ma Meant.

Reggie—If pa was to die, ma, would he go to heaven? Ma—Hush, hush, Reggie! Whoever has been putting such ridiculous thoughts into your head?—Sketch.

It Will Come.

Neil—As people grow old I like to see them keep up with the fashions. Belle—Yes, we never grow too old to acquire the latest wrinkle.—Philadelphia Record.

The man whose eyes are nailed not on the nature of his act, but on the wages, whether it be money or office or fame, is almost equally low.—Emerson.

A Discovery

By MARY L. BLACKISTON

One day a man stood in London beside one of those holes left for the use of persons who descend to the sewers. The place was in an unfrequented portion of the city, and there was no one near him. He looked about him and listened for a footfall, then, producing a crowbar, inserted one end under the round metal cover of the hole and, lifting it, discovered, permitting the cover to fall back into its place. Once in the sewer he drew from under his ragged coat a lantern.

John Murphy made his living by picking up articles that, having got into the sewer, were lost to their owners. Soon he found an umbrella. It was covered with sewer mud, but was of silk with an elaborately carved handle. John knew that when new it would have cost a fortune, and he was not a man to let such a chance pass. He went on looking about him for other articles, but after an hour's walk had found nothing. He was about to leave the sewer when he stumbled on the biggest find in his life—the biggest find in the world.

He came to a place where a small piece of the masonry had fallen in, forming the buttress of his lantern upward, he threw the light into the aperture left vacant and disclosed a broken floor composed of marble squares. Lifting the fallen debris so as to enable him to get his hands on what was above him, he drew himself up and found himself in a room. Throwing his light about him, he saw a number of boxes, some of which were loosely covered. Examining the contents of one of them, he threw his light on gold coins. Other boxes contained like contents. In the room was a treasure of inestimable value.

It was now night. Murphy wished to emerge by a window near the break and took the risk of doing so. Several persons saw him, but thought nothing of the matter. As soon as he got up on the street he saw straight before him the Bank of England. Then he knew that he had been in the strong room of the largest banking institution in the world.

One morning the governor of the bank received a note addressed to him, ungrammatical, misspelled, bearing every evidence of having been written by an illiterate person. The writer said that the bank was in danger of losing a great deal of money. A letter addressed to John Murphy at a certain postoffice substitution, inviting the said Murphy to state his case to the governor, would receive attention. Many odd letters reach the Bank of England, and Murphy's letter was waded out of the governor's mail before reaching him.

A few days later the bank received by express ten sovereigns wrapped in a piece of paper on which was written in pencil the number of the box in the strong room from which they had been taken. The money in the box was counted and found to be short by ten sovereigns.

The incident excited a commotion among the officials of the bank. A meeting in the governor's private room was called to consider the loss and how it could have occurred. No one dreamed that there was a hole in the floor of the strong room, and no one could suggest a probable way by which the coins sent to the bank had been removed. While the officials were considering John Murphy appeared before an official at a desk and said that he wished to see the governor. Having been questioned by the startled official, he said that he was the man who had sent the ten sovereigns to the bank and was there to tell how he got them.

The official had not heard of the sending of the coins, for that had been kept a profound secret. He told John Murphy to move on, and John did so, but to another part of the building, where he told his story again and again. He was just about to be taken into custody by a bank policeman when a prominent official of the bank who knew the secret of the returned sovereigns happened to inquire his offense.

Within five minutes the ragged sewer searcher was standing in the governor's room confronting a number of sleek-looking directors. He was permitted to speak and told the assembly how he had got into the strong room. Some the sewer and how he or any one else who knew the secret might go and come at will.

If the receipt of the sovereigns had caused a commotion this information raised a whirlwind of excitement. A committee was sent to examine the strong room and returned confirming Murphy's information. John was held for two reasons—the money must be accounted to make sure that he had not appropriated any of it, and if he should tell the secret the matter would make a much greater sensation among the public than even it did among the officials of the bank.

The count required a long while, and during the time it was in progress the sewer was repaired and the room made strong. When it was all over the discoverer of the break was summoned to the governor's room.

"How many persons have you told of this matter?" asked the latter.

"No one except you in the bank."

"On that table are a thousand sovereigns. Take them and make yourself comfortable. You are also appointed one of the strong room watchers with a salary of £500 a year."

Cheating the Easier Way.

"I thought you were going to invest your money in stocks?"

"I did think of it."

"Have you changed your mind?"

"Yes, I went into a broker's place the other day for the purpose of watching the market a little while. Have you ever been in a broker's office?"

"Yes."

"Then you know the layout. There is a big blackboard upon one of the walls. At each side of the room there are tickers. Facing the blackboard are several rows of chairs, which are occupied by men who have bought or sold. They sit there, nervously chewing their cigars and watching the quotations as they are written on the blackboard."

"What has that to do with your decision not to invest?"

"After watching these watchers for a while and studying their expressions I decided that it would be easier to go on working for the money I'm going to need."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Mirabeau as an Orator.

No one, not even Talleyrand, could approach Mirabeau as a speaker, and, curiously enough, this violent, emotional man was, as orator, perfectly self-possessed.

"During the debate on the disturbances at Marseilles the light interrupted his speech with cries of 'stand up! stand up!' he said, 'for these amenities to do down.' Then he went on with his speech, at the point where he had broken off."

His face, pitted with smallpox, was ugly, says the author of "Mirabeau," but his very ugliness, transformed by the play of his countenance, was marvellously turned into a source of power. When he shook his "terrible boar's head" he was terrifying and no man dared to interrupt him.

Meerschaum and the Turks.

Meerschaum used to be considered a mere curiosity by the Turks, who had no other use for it than as a substitute for fuller's soap. The story runs that the Turkish ambassador at the Austrian court, in the eighteenth century, was a native of Eski Scher. Wanting to help his city at a time of great poverty, he took a sample of this queer stuff to Vienna, thinking that the "frank" as all foreigners were then called, might have some use for it. The Germans were quick to see its utility for pipe bowls, but declared that it was good for nothing else. More than a century has confirmed this judgment, for who has yet discovered any other use for meerschaum? For pipe making it is an ideal raw material. Here is a stone which is easily moulded when wet, and when dry becomes hard and resists fire.

Between Governors.

When the late Senator Bob Taylor was governor of Tennessee he received a letter from an inmate of the Missouri state penitentiary. His correspondent pleaded that his name, too, was Taylor, claimed kinship with the governor and begged him to use his influence with Governor Francis of Missouri to obtain a pardon. A short time afterward Governor Francis received the following letter from Governor Bob:

My Dear Governor Francis—You've got a fellow over there in your penitentiary named Taylor, who says he's kin to me and wants me to help him get out. I wish if you see your way clear toward doing it, you would turn him loose, and if any of your kindfolks ever get to my pen I'll return the favor.

—New York Post.

The Scot's Consolation.

He was a frugal Scot, and when the collection plate came round he dropped in a florin in mistake for the humble copper. Speedily discovering his mistake, however, he stopped softly down the aisle and requested the collector to give him back the coin, which request was politely but firmly refused. A shade of disappointment flitted over the northerner's face as he walked slowly back to his pew. "Aweel," he said, "it's a loss, but there's some sma' consolation in reflectin' it's a bad one. It might have got me into trouble anywhere else."—Pall Mall Gazette.

Constructively "She."

In a well known college for women where the faculty consists chiefly of the gentler sex a meeting of the academic council was in progress. Here and there a lone man sat isolated in the concourse of learned ladies. An amendment had just been proposed.

"Where is the person who offers this amendment?" inquired the president.

"Who is she?"

Whereupon Mr. Flower, the popular young professor of a favorite subject, rose and replied deprecatingly, "I am she."—Youth's Companion.

Old Age a Paradox.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, discussing old age at a dinner in New York, smiled pensively and said:

"Old age is not so sad as youth seems it. Old age is a paradox. It may be truly said that the best years of a man's life come after the best years of his life have been wasted."

Real Proof.

Johnny—Tommy Brown's mother makes him go to Sunday school. Mamma—Why do you say she makes him go? Johnny—Because he goes—doesn't that prove it?—Puck.

Bullights in Private.

Private bullights are occasionally given by the very rich people in Madrid, and guests are invited to them as they would be to a dinner.

The Ghost Locomotive

By THOMAS R. DEAN

The address of a president of a society for the advancement of science containing a statement that was taken to reflect favorably on the investigations of societies for psychical research has revived the interest in ghost stories. Now that scientists are beginning to look with more favor, or at least with less indifference, upon ghosts these stories will be more likely to begin again to come from the graveyard where scientific contempt has for many years buried them. Here is one that has recently been resurrected.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, away out on the Canadian Pacific railroad, Bill Burton, while driving his engine on a misty night over a road that had been washed by heavy rains for four days, came suddenly upon a landslide. Bill reversed the lever and jumped, striking his head on a bowlder, and was instantly killed. The locomotive stopped within a few feet of the slide, then began to back. There was nothing behind it but a caeoose, in which were two trainmen playing seven up. They noticed the shock, but, being intent on the game, paid no attention to it and didn't know a few minutes after it occurred that they were moving backward at breakneck speed.

The first thing they knew they didn't know anything, for they doubled up on a passenger train standing on the track and were both killed.

One who knew Burton intimately remarked at the time of his death that it was perhaps best he had been killed. He was a very sensitive man, and the knowledge that he had saved his own life by jumping at the expense of such a disaster, as resulted from his leaving his engine reversed with steam on would have driven him to suicide. Another friend, also an engineer, added, "Yes, and it would have troubled him living."

One night, just such a night as the one on which this catastrophe took place, Joe Bigley, an engineer, was approaching the place of the landslide, only he was going in the opposite direction, when suddenly he saw a locomotive headlight, full glare, right in front of him. With a gasp for breath he threw back the lever. As he did so he judged that the engineer of the other engine also reversed, for simultaneously both came to a stop and then began to move backward.

Bigley, seeing that the danger was passed, stopped his engine and then moved ahead again. The light before him receded. He let it get far enough to avoid danger, then put on his regular speed. He was expecting every moment to get a signal that the backing engine was about to switch off, but no such signal came. Bigley whistled, but got no reply. Thinking to get nearer the other locomotive, he put on speed, but just as much speed was put on the other engine, and although Bigley opened her up as wide as he could the retreating engine kept her distance.

All of a sudden the engineer heard a terrific crash come from where the other engine was, and the light went out. He had no more doubt that the locomotive had smashed into something than that he was holding a throttle. He kept on to give assistance, slowing down when approaching the place where the smashup had occurred, but he went on and on and didn't come to any wreck.

In fact, there wasn't any wreck that could be found. The road was perfectly free, and Bigley pulled on to the terminal. When he got there he collapsed. When asked if he had run anybody down or anything like that he couldn't answer for a time, and when he righted himself he would not say anything about his experience, but went to the superintendent and told him that nothing could induce him to run over that part of the road again. The superintendent got the story out of him and knew what it all meant, but he didn't let on. If he had given out that Bill Burton's ghost was causing trouble around the place where he had been killed he wouldn't have been able to get an engineer to take trains past it for love or money.

"All right, Bigley," he said, "I'll give you a different run entirely. But I don't want you to say anything about this business. I think your nerves have been overstrained, and that has caused the apparition. But the men on the road are easily influenced by a superstitious story, and it wouldn't be well to have your illusions get out."

As this occurrence was kept pretty close, the date was not noticed, but just a year from that time another engineer had the same experience. Then it leaked out, or, rather, he told all about it, and somebody suggested that perhaps Bill Burton's ghost was up and doing on the anniversary of his death. They looked up the date and found that the accident and the two occasions on which the backing light was seen all occurred on the 23d of November, the day Burton was killed.

After that the only trouble the management had to get engineers to take a train past the place was on the night of the anniversary. One of the men, Tom Logan, who had been connected with the road for many years and had served tough as an elephant's hide, used to do the job. The president and superintendent went on the locomotive on one anniversary, and they must have scared Burton away, for nothing was seen of the headlight nor has anything been seen of it since.

A Poor Place to Sleep.

Traveling in Africa is doubtless beset with more danger than in any other part of the world. Wild beasts, wild men, poisonous plants, storms, fevers and other sickness combine to make a formidable array. A recent traveler in Gwallah, a district in north-east Africa, encountered a new danger. Vegetation is very luxuriant, and when he pitched camp he noticed that a number of dead birds lay on the ground. Before he had time to comment on this fact four of the dogs, which had been smelling around, leaped over and died within five minutes. It was supposed that they had eaten some poisonous plant, but this idea was dispelled when three of the natives, who had slept on the ground, were found dead next morning. Then it was discovered that there was a stratum of deadly gas covering the ground to the depth of three or four inches. The traveler with his troupe lost no time in getting out of that vicinity.

Ruby Mines of Mogok.

The civilized world knows little of the famous ruby mines of Mogok, in a valley of Burma, whence come nearly all the large rubies, for the road lies through a forest which is seldom trod by whites. A few Englishmen who live there have laid out a polo ground, and between this and the town are the mines. The diggings are almost entirely on the village, and the main street is already half destroyed. The work goes on all day and all night, the ruby-bearing earth being brought up in iron trolleys. A few strangers who have called at the mines have been told by the officials that they can keep any ruby they may find, but no one has ever been able to find one yet. The gems are embedded in the gold colored clay, which stretches along the whole of the valley, and it is only after the earth has been washed that the rubies are seen on the tables.—Argonaut.

Made the Journey Quite Cheerful.

Mr. Justice Maule, once went on circuit with Judge Coleridge in a part of England where the high sheriff was a shy and modest man and very much alarmed at having to entertain his cynical lordship. Coming home in his coach with the two judges he thought it his duty to make conversation for them. He observed, that he hoped there would be better weather, as the moon had changed.

"And are you such a fool, Mr. Jones, as to imagine that the moon has any effect on the weather?" said Maule.

"Really, Brother Maule," said Coleridge, who was politeness itself, "you are very hard upon our friend. For my part, I think the moon has considerable effect upon it."

"Then," said Maule, "you are as great a fool as Jones is." After which, conversation in the sheriff's carriage languished.

Napoleon's Masterful Mother.

The relationship between Napoleon Bonaparte and his mother, the Mme. Mere of imperial times, was peculiar. Mme. Letizia, who was thirty-four when her famous son was born, had always been complete mistress of her household. Even when her son was emperor and his word was law, writing as she might have been in public to do him honor, in private she insisted on the privileges of her motherhood.

Baron Larrey, in his historical essay, writes: "One day there was a family meeting, and Napoleon gave his mother his hand to kiss, but Mme. Mere moved aside the proffered hand. Napoleon then took his mother's hand and kissed it, and she said to him, 'See, you know quite well that in public I must treat you with due respect, because I am your subject, but in private I am your mother.'"

Safe Either Way.

A farmer in a cyclone district was building a superb stone wall. He was building the wall strong and solid, five feet across the base and four feet high. A stranger stopped his horse and said to the farmer:

"You're taking a lot of trouble with that wall."

"You bet," the farmer answered. "I'm putting her here to stay."

"What's the good of that?" sneered the stranger. "A cyclone'll come along and she'll blow over just the same."

"Well, let her," said the farmer. "She'll be a foot higher if she does."—Minneapolis Journal.

Literary Note.

"Mabel thinks of becoming an author, and this morning she asked me which school of literature I would recommend."

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her I only knew of two kinds, the kind that says 'thru' and the kind that doesn't."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Let Us Forget.

Small Arthur—Mamma, I bury my finger. Please tie a rag on it. Mamma (after an examination)—It isn't injured enough to need tying up, dear. Small Arthur—Well, tie a rag on it anyway so I won't forget which finger it is that hurts.—Exchange.

A Fair Inference.

"Does your son intend to take a fat course in college?"

"It looks that way. His liquor bill for the first month was over \$36."—Judge.

Impressive.

"What did you see in the Grand canyon that most impressed you?"

"A mighty pretty girl astride a brown mule."—Chicago Record-Herald.

If you would create something you must be something.—Goethe.