

A Religious Maniac.

One of the most awful instances of what alienists term acute idiopathic mania, the result of religious emotionalism, occurred on the 19th of April, in the vicinity of Chicago. Many years have elapsed since the fanatic Adventist, Freeman, killed his sleeping daughter in obedience to a supposed divine command to test his faith. At the time of the tragedy the eyes of a horrified world were turned upon the insignificant town of Pocasset, Massachusetts, and the alienists of America and Europe made exhaustive studies of every phase of Freeman's case, from his first falling under the dominion of the Adventist folly, to the rapid incidence of insanity, on to his final restoration to reason. The story of Dykstra is only less painful to read because it is as yet unaccompanied by the details of the progress of the wretched man's Bible-nourished delusion.

The story of the murder is told as follows by a Chicago paper:

To atone for the crime of Cain, Abel Dykstra, a Dutch farmer in the colony at South Holland, slew his five-year-old son Peter yesterday morning. He believed he was Abraham and had a divine command to sacrifice Isaac. For several days the man had been moody and had begged his wife to remove their two children — Peter, aged 5, and Cornelius, aged 20 months— from his reach in case he became suddenly insane.

Yesterday morning he met his wife and children on the way from the home of her father, Peter Van Drunnen, where they had gone for safety the night before. Dykstra kneeled and tenderly kissed the boy, and, leading him by the hand, all went home together. The mother went into the kitchen and was preparing breakfast, when she saw her husband in the yard whetting a scythe, while Peter played near him. Mrs. Dykstra ran out and took the scythe from him.

"I must do it this morning," the man shouted. "God has ordered me to do it."

Dykstra made a rush for the boy and dragged him into a shed near by and took up the corn knife.

"Papa, please do not hurt me," cried the boy, and he struggled to free himself from the man's grasp. Mrs. Dykstra also pleaded with her husband to release the boy, but in vain.

Holding Peter with his left hand, Dykstra drew the knife across the lad's throat. The vertebræ saved the head from being severed from the body. The boy ran nearly 100 feet before he fell and died.

Dykstra then saddled his horse, mounted and galloped to Lansing, three miles away. The mother, who had seen her child killed, hastily notified the neighbors, and in a short time fifty or more men

were chasing the fugitive. He was soon lost sight of in one of the marshes south of Harvey.

Dykstra rode to the house of John Meeker, a farmer for whom he had worked, and said: "God told me to sacrifice my boy, and as much as I loved him, I had to do it to please God. After I killed him the devil laughed at me."

Not waiting to hear more, Meeker drove out in search of Constables Frank Harrington and Fred Randall. They arrested Dykstra and took him before Justice De Yong. Deputy Coroner Reynolds held an inquest and committed the man to jail pending an investigation by the grand jury. Immediately after the verdict was found the officer started to bring the prisoner to Chicago, driving across country to Harvey to take a train. At 6 o'clock he was taken to the county jail.

Dykstra is 35 years old and a religious enthusiast. He sat up all Tuesday night reading the Bible.

Prediction by a Priest.

The Rev. Father D. J. Stafford, rector of St. Patrick's church in this city, and one of the most prominent Catholics in America, whose name is known to almost every member of the Catholic church in this country, and who recently declined an offer of \$40,000 for forty lectures, made a remarkable statement before the twenty-fourth annual convention of the Catholic Young Men's National Union in session at Washington, D. C. His statement was as follows:

"There is something lacking in you young men. Your lack of ambition should give place to energy, loyalty and interest in church work. I venture to say that if the young men of our church will work energetically and with the same ambition as their sisters, this country will be ours inside of fifty years."—[New York World.]

Disinterested.

Says the Literary Digest: "Fifteen clergymen in New Brunswick, N. J., have informed the people of that city that they discountenance Sunday funerals, not only because of the unnecessary and uncalled-for strain upon them as clergymen, but because of the amount of Sunday labor required of laboring men who need rest."

Of course the good pulpiteers have no eye on the main chance of a generous fee for a Saturday's or Monday's funeral discourse. They are never afflicted that way; but their great love for the laboring man and the desire that he shall rest on the Sabbath, doing nothing but listening to a droning sermon about immaculate conceptions and virgins giving birth to gods, is as burdensome a task as they think should be imposed upon him. Well, there is something in that.—[Progressive Thinker.]

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