

The Observer

MORO, OREGON. FRIDAY, JULY 7, 1911

Personal Talk With You. At any time when requested to do so, the paper will be discontinued. But we expect that all arrears will be paid before such request is made.

WORK WITH DEATH

Powder Makers Toil In Constant Peril of Their Lives.

THEY DON'T WANT VISITORS

Men Callers Are Permitted in the Plant Only With Extreme Reluctance and After Drastic Precautions, and Women Are Absolutely Barred.

In all the vocations in which a man can make a living in the United States there is none more perilous than the manufacture of gunpowder and none in which the public, which usually suffers severely in case of accident, takes so small an interest.

The men who work in powder plants are a study in themselves. Probably in no other business do the human agents take more precautions against disaster with such pitiful results.

Men who work in powder plants are in constant fear of death. They are face to face with peril every second. Instead of growing hardened to it, as do the laborers in many other fields of danger, they appear to be the most superstitious class of men on earth.

They are well paid. A man who has nerve enough to work at this trade is worthy of his hire. He can command \$10 a day, sometimes \$20. He practically makes his own rules; since he is the one to suffer from an infraction of them. His every suspicion is respected by his employer. He cannot dictate the hours of labor, since that is a matter eternally in dispute, as in other kinds of labor, but he can dictate the conditions under which he works from the moment he enters the factory until he leaves.

These superstitious seem absurd sometimes, but they are the law of the gunpowder factory. If you are an employer you break the law at the risk of financial loss; if you are a fellow employee you violate it at the risk of your life.

One of the first laws among the employees is that of self preservation. They have a deep rooted fear of the casual visitor. Few men have gone through a gunpowder plant out of mere curiosity. They are not wanted and are told so frankly. If they succeed in obtaining the permission of the superintendent or possibly of some one higher in authority they are subjected to an extraordinary ordeal before they are admitted to the sacred precincts.

First they are searched, and no police official is more adept in the art of "frisking" than is the outer guardian of the average gunpowder plant. Every piece of metal, from pocket-knife to garter clasp—every coin, match, suspender buckle, everything that could possibly strike a spark, is removed. The husband of the most fashionable derby is examined with care to see that it carries no metal initials. And this examination is not carried on alone by the official whose favor you have gained. A representative of the employees takes an active part in the examination, and if he has any doubts he will politely request you to strip to the skin.

Once inside the powder factory you are under even more careful scrutiny. Your shoes are taken away, and you are provided with felt slippers. Convinced that on your person there is no piece of metal which under any provocation could strike a spark, you may feel at liberty to roam around, but you are not. Your every movement is watched carefully, and should you make a gesture calculated to inspire distrust you would be hustled out of the building and told to leave the neighborhood within a given time.

I had a graphic illustration of the extreme care taken by these men to prevent an accident and to save their own lives. After having been carefully searched and after having surrendered everything which might come under the classification of metal I was admitted to the plant. Secure in the knowledge that I was thoroughly "disinfected," I assumed a nonchalant which I was far from feeling as I watched the various processes of making gunpowder. I was so well at ease that I drew a toothpick from my pocket and calmly picked my teeth.

Instantly I was thrown to the floor and while two husky men held me a third searched my clothing. When finally I was released it was explained to me that they found the toothpick might be a match.

Laboring under the constant fear of death, the employees grow extraordinarily superstitious. Once a woman to set foot within a powder factory and the entire force will quit. It is one of the axioms of the trade that a woman brings misfortune, and it is useless to argue the question. A woman photographer for a newspaper on a "Sunday assignment" once was admitted into an Illinois powder factory by an inexperienced official, and the next day the plant was shut down. The employees struck. The plant remained idle until an entire new force was recruited.—Chicago News.

Natural Longing. However old, humble, plain, desolate, afflicted, we may be, so long as our hearts preserve the feeblest spark of life they preserve also, shivering near that pale ember, a starved, ghostly longing for appreciation and affection.

"Is heaven alone that is given a way; 'tis every God may be had for the asking.—Lowell.

The Raddason Robbery

Story of a Novel Entertainment

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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"A very neat job," commented Detective Fenn as he finished his inspection of the Raddason house after the robbery.

"A cleanup for me," grunted Hiram Raddason. "After this careful inspection of the premises I suppose you have some theory to advance, Mr. Fenn."

The detective frowned at the millionaire victim of the jewel robbery, and then a frown changed to a smile, for it would never do to antagonize this man who had employed him and who had promised him a personal reward of a thousand dollars, besides his professional fee, if he recovered the stolen jewels. Nevertheless Detective Fenn was reluctant to confide his theories to any one.

"Well, sir," he said patiently, "to sum up what I have gathered, you say you retired last night about 11:30 and that the jewels were placed for safe keeping under your pillow. You were all alone in the house for the reason that your wife and family are at your country home and you merely stopped here for the night, as you were in town for the purpose of getting the jewels from the bank to take to Mrs. Raddason. You say you found the caretaker absent and decided to remain here all night, as you were too tired to go on to a hotel."

"You went to bed after assuring yourself that the house was without any other occupant than yourself. You are quite sure that you did not miss some closet in your search?"

Mr. Raddason shook his head positively. "I tell you, Fenn, I did not leave a corner uninvestigated. I began at the wine cellar and went up to the closet, a curtained doorway or a piece of furniture that I did not peer behind or under or poke at with my cane. Can't fool me on that. I'll swear there wasn't a human soul in this house last night save myself when I went to bed."

"And you heard no unusual sound during the night?" asked Mr. Fenn.

"Not a sound from the time I dropped off to sleep until I awoke at 7 to find the jewel case gone from under my pillow."

"Didn't feel dull or stupid as if a drug of some sort had been used to keep you quiet?" pursued the detective.

"Never felt brighter in my life," assured Raddason. "Put my hand under my pillow for my watch, looked at it and then recollected the jewel case. It was gone."

"Can't understand why they didn't take the watch, too," mused Detective Fenn.

"That's another funny kink in the matter. Every door and window in the house locked as snug as you please, and yet the jewels disappeared. Chain up on the front door and the other doors locked on the inside. What do you make of it?" Mr. Raddason looked down at the thin, wiry little man before him with skeptical eyes.

"There isn't a clew to hang a theory on," declared the detective frankly, "nothing except the trapdoor to the roof. You noticed that the hook was unfastened on the underside?"

"Yes, but this is a detached house, and there is no way a thief could make a getaway from the roof."

"Thieves used to go about their business on Shank's mares, didn't they, Mr. Raddason? And after automobiles came into fashion you read about them going off into the country and making their getaway in a motorcar. Well, what would you expect of the thief of today, eh? The latest thing in transportation, of course." The detective smiled at his employer knowingly.

"An aeroplane, by Jove!" ejaculated Mr. Raddason.

"That is my idea," admitted the detective modestly.

"And a very clever theory, too," admitted Raddason genially. "Now, Mr. Fenn, if you have no objection just give me an outline of how you believe the robbery was accomplished."

"It's soon explained, sir. The crook knew of your intention to get the jewels from the bank, possibly trailed you from your country place, where he might have had a pal in your employ; was sure you had 'em in the house, waited till you got to bed and asleep, lit on the roof with his machine, came down and got the jewels, skipped up through the skylight and into his flying machine and so away."

"My dear fellow, that's a pretty theory, but how many crooks would discover by turning off a job in a conspicuous thing as an aeroplane? How many men of that class could afford to even hire one of the machines, much less find a mechanic to operate it for him. You're dreaming, Fenn. Five—ten years from now and I'll believe that."

"Very well, Mr. Raddason," said the detective without displeasure. "I'll just stay around the house today and chase up a few clews. You'll be here yourself?"

"That's 4 o'clock. I have to catch a train to Redmont then. Investigate all you want to. You'll find me in the library."

"Very good, sir."

From cellars to kitchens and servants' quarters, all through the drawing rooms, shrouded in summer coverings, prowling around on his hands and knees, poking into dusty corners, peering into the most unsuspected places, went Detective Fenn.

It was a halting case. Detective

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

Penn admitted that to himself as he sat on the side of the banker's bed to rest from his labors. If he could discover the thief he would receive the \$1,000 reward, and that \$1,000 would purchase the little home in the country which he and his wife had long planned for. James Fenn was a private detective, and the news of the robbery had not yet gone forth to the newspapers.

"I've simply got to earn that 'thousand,' grumped Detective Fenn. 'But how?' He glanced wildly around the room in which he had not discovered the slightest clew so far, and his eyes fell on a pair of bedroom slippers near his feet. They were large slippers and apparently the property of Mr. Raddason; an elaborate pattern was embroidered in beads on the velvet slippers, but some of the threads were broken and the beads were slipping off. In fact, Fenn noted here and there on the light carpet some of the rose colored beads that formed the flowers, and farther on near the hall door there were some green beads.

Interested now, he slipped to his hands and knees and followed the trail of the dropped beads. He brought his light and his magnifying glass into constant play as he moved slowly down the length of the velvet carpeted hall to the foot of the stairway that led to another floor of bedchambers.

Now and then he came upon a dropped bead, sometimes green or white or pink, on a stair and along corridors, sufficiently numerous to give him a definite clew to follow. Up a second flight of stairs he followed the trail of the beads until a group of several brought him to a standstill at the foot of the ladder leading to the trapdoor in the roof.

"That was the weak point in my theory of the flying machine," he murmured to himself as he climbed the ladder. "I couldn't understand how the dickens that chap knew the trapdoor would be unhooked from within. It's clear enough now." He chuckled as he pushed the trap and emerged to the red painted tin roof.

The moon sun glinted on something bright, and he bent to discover another bead.

"Ah!" smiled Detective Fenn, shading his eyes with his hand and looking away off to the blue haze which marked the rural district where he had planned to have a home some day. "Looks as if that home isn't so far off, Eliza!"

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven beads led Fenn in a zigzag line to the foot of one of the four chimneys of the house. This chimney, unlike the others, was topped with a large galvanized iron hood that effectually prevented any drafts from entering the unused flues. A little hinged door on either end made it possible to occasionally use the chimney without removing the iron hood, but now these little doors were closed.

Detective Fenn's penknife pried open the nearest door, and the sunshine fell inside the opening and lighted up the sooty cap of the chimney. There resting on the narrow brick ledge was a paper wrapped parcel which unfolded in Fenn's hands into the Raddason jewel case. The jewels were safe inside.

With a long drawn sigh of relief and a parting wave of his hand at the distant country, Detective Fenn descended the stairs and stopped before the library door to regain his breath and to appear as nonchalant and cool as a detective is supposed to feel at critical moments. Then he opened the door and entered the room.

Mr. Raddason looked up with a slight smile that broadened to laughing distaste when he saw the parcel that Fenn carried.

"Caught me, eh?" he chuckled, holding out his hand for the jewel case. "Well done, Fenn. I thought I had you fairly puzzled. I used to read detective stories until I got tired of their plots, so I invent 'em myself now and watch some sleuth like you work 'em out before my eyes. It's worth a thousand easily to me. Tell me why you abandoned your flying machine theory."

"I really wasn't a theory, Mr. Raddason. I just mentioned it because I couldn't think of anything else at the moment. You did it very cleverly, sir. You did leave a patch of soot on the sleeve of your pajamas which I could not understand until I found the beads that you lost from your slippers. By the way, sir, you did wear the slippers last night when you went up to the roof to conceal the jewels?"

Mr. Raddason nodded. "I didn't know the beads were being scattered. So I left a trail of evidence as I went along, eh, straight to the chimney?"

"Yes, sir."

The millionaire wrote a check for an amount that covered a generous fee as well as the thousand dollars special reward and gave it to the detective. "I'll confess I ought to have found a better hiding place, Fenn," he said ruefully. "The next time I set you a problem it'll be one that keeps you guessing for awhile. Come out now and have some lunch with me."

"Thanks, Mr. Raddason, but I've got to meet Mrs. Fenn. We're going to look at a little place in the country where we're thinking of buying." And as the detective hurried away he looked far happier than the millionaire who had planned this fictitious jewel robbery to afford himself some hours of amusement.

SALAMANDER SUPERSTITION. How the Reptile May Have Got Its Fireproof Reputation.

There is a very ancient belief that the reptile known as the salamander is proof against fire. It is not known how this superstition had its rise, but it will probably always continue to be held by some people, although it has been conclusively shown that the fireproof qualities of the creature exist only in imagination.

Dr. Stejneger, reptilian expert at the Smithsonian institution, tells a story which may furnish a reason for the continuance of the belief in question.

"Once I was camping out," he says, "with a party of friends, hunting and fishing. We had lighted a big fire, using for fuel several old logs. While we were seated around watching the progress of some cookery in which we were engaged a young lady at my side gave a little scream and pointed into the flame. I looked, and there

was a small salamander crawling right out from among the glowing embers. It walked away unburnt and made its escape.

"Now, that salamander had occupied a hole in one of the logs used for fuel. Several species of its kind live in old tree trunks. Doubtless this one found that it was getting uncomfortably hot and crawled out. Being moist and slimy, its body was protected from injury by fire long enough to enable it to escape through the embers. But the sight of the lizard deliberately making its appearance from the midst of the fire was certainly very surprising. Any ignorant person might easily have been led to imagine that the creature was fireproof. It seemed to me quite probable that the superstition took its origin from just such occurrences."—New York World.

Investing Money. World's Work Magazine sets forth some of the absurdities that people for the most part intelligent will commit when they have money to invest. If a man is sick he goes to a doctor; if in a row with his neighbors he goes to a lawyer; if in spiritual trouble he consults a minister or priest; if in business straits he calls upon the banker. If, however, he has a problem of investment on his hands he calls upon merchants, lawyers, bankers, ministers and miscellaneous people quite indiscriminately and with about the same practical results that he would get if he followed the same method in sickness, in legal trouble, in business trouble or in spiritual woe.

Happiest Girl in Lincoln. A Lincoln, Neb., girl writes, "I had been ailing for some time with chronic constipation and stomach trouble. I began taking Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets and in three days I was able to be up and get better right along. I am the proudest girl in Lincoln to find such a good medicine." For sale by all dealers.

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Setting an Example. Whether the hotel proprietor I touched with the other day is a hero publicly maintaining his sincere convictions as an encouragement to others or a slave in his own domain I cannot determine," said the gray headed man. "I met him in the street far from his hotel, and at his suggestion we lunched together. We ate in his own dining room. He tipped the waiter. We had checked our hats, and he tipped the boy in attendance. "Do you tip in your own hotel?" I gasped.

"Always," said he. "It is as much trouble to wait on me as anybody else."—New York Sun.

Our Country. Let our object be our country, our whole country and nothing but our country. And by the blessing of God, may that country itself become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression and terror, but of wisdom, of peace and of liberty upon which the world may gaze with admiration forever.—Daniel Webster.

Punctuation. Pupil—Which is the proper punctuation to use after the word "cash" when entered up in the ledger? Teacher—Well, it's immaterial, but some people usually make a dash after cash.—New York Times.

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Fear is far more painful to cowardice than death to true courage.—Sidney.

CASTORIA For Infants and Children. The Kind You Have Always Bought Bears the Signature of J. C. Watson

Casualties of the Cradle. The burden of Prussia's military state, not spared even to the babes in their cradles, has proved too much for some of the younger members of the royal families. "The House of Hohenzollern," Mr. Brayley Hodggets mentions that the two sons whom the first crown princess of Prussia bore her husband (at the beginning of the eighteenth century) both died in their cradles, one from a nervous shock caused by the salute from heavy guns with which his arrival was heralded and the other from the burden of a golden crown which was placed on his head after baptism.

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Never leave home on a journey without a bottle of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. It is almost certain to be needed and cannot be obtained when you board the cars or steamships. For sale by all dealers.

DOING RIGHT. Practical duty enriches the fancy and the heart, and action clears and deepens the affections. No one can have a true idea of right until he does it, nor any genuine reverence for it, nor any peace ineffable in it till he does it always and with alacrity.—J. Martineau.

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