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Philosophy Of The Hangman

Reminiscence Of Radclive Who Sent Nearly Two Hundred Souls Into Eternity.

In these days when capital punishment is so earnestly discussed, pro and con, by the press and pulpit of the land the philosophy of a hangman would doubtless be interesting to many of those who favor the abolition of the death penalty.

Radclive was the public executioner for the Dominion of Canada for twenty-one years and during that time sent one hundred and ninety-two souls into eternity. Each one a second after the condemned person's spiritual adviser murmured the words "Deliver us from evil." Nine of these were murderesses. He lived in the City of Toronto as a hermit, going to do his "damnable job" as he called it only when he was notified by the department of justice. He was known to few and he scarcely ever left the avenue where he lived. For fifteen years his only company was his aged mother and a dog, his wife having left him shortly after he obtained the title of public executioner. Then his mother left him. The "killer" himself was a finely built, big, burly Englishman who had traveled the world as sailor, chef and dealer in all sorts of merchandise. He was the son of an English Church clergyman, well educated; had a degree as a pharmacist and had spent some time in medical college. He was fond of music and flowers and his garden was a noted one for rare specimens. Moreover he was tender hearted and kind to a degree and the children and babies of the neighborhood clung to him and followed him around his home and up and down the street. Mothers who would not have it said that they had been seen talking to the "hangman" were glad to allow the children to go with him because they were always safe. He used to say: "I am crazy alright for children and dogs speak to me, but men and women won't."

My first acquaintance with this peculiar man was on the eve of the hanging of a negro named Boyd in the City of Toronto. I had lived in the neighborhood for months but had never seen him until this night when I found him pacing the floor in an agonizing excitement. He invited me in and explained that he did not like newspapermen. Later when I learned to know him when I was about the only man he had left to talk to he went into the history of his "killing business."

"No one," he started, "not even my wife and family want to see and talk to me because I am a 'killer.' My business when I came to Canada was that of chef and after securing a position with the Royal Canadian Yacht Club I brought my family to Toronto and settled here. There was a man hanged at Guelph and the sheriff's man made such a botch of the thing that the man did not die for fifteen minutes. It was the talk of the country at the time and the government decided that a public executioner for the Dominion of Canada should be named at a yearly retainer and fees. I had studied the anatomy of the neck and believe I can break the best neck in the world by my method of tightening the rope and springing the trap. So I applied for the job and got it. My first hanging was Burchell at Woodstock, Ont., and the crime for which he was found guilty was so terrible that I had no compunctions about putting him out of business in quick manner. Then I kept on, going at the call of the sheriffs from Vancouver to Halifax, where a murderer had been sentenced. My family deserted me and changed their names but I kept right on the job because I argued with myself that if I was doing wrong then the government of the country was wrong and would be punished. I held that I was the minister of justice at a hanging and that if I was a murderer he was also a murderer. And so I pacified my conscience in that way for many years, but of late it is killing me. The remorse which comes over me is terrible, and my nerves give out until I have not slept for days at a time. I suffered agony of mind that was terrible and began to feel as if iron bars tightened around me. I used to say to condemned persons as I beckoned with my hand, "Come with me." Now at night when I lay down I start with a roar as victim after victim comes up before me. I can see them on the trap waiting a second before they faced their Maker. They taunt me and haunt me until I am nearly crazy with an unearthly fear."

Then the hangman would shake as if with an ague. One time there was a hanging scheduled for Rat Portage, Ont., It was but a short time before Radclive died. He had declared he would not kill another man. The department notified him of the date and the other particulars and as the day drew around Radclife became terribly upset. He would yell and shriek: "Go way from me." I thought that he was going to die and so informed the department of justice. A representative came down and told Radclive he would have to go or lose the position. He insisted he was too ill and at the last moment when the train for the north pulled out another man was on the way to do the job. Five minutes after that train left Radclive was up and shaving himself, apparently as well as ever. The physician said he was suffering from nervous shock.

To continue in Radclive's own words: "I will go to hell sure, and terrible punishment, for I am two hundred times a murderer, but I won't kill another man. I had always thought capital punishment was right, but not now. I believe the Almighty will visit the Christian nations with dire calamity if they don't stop taking the lives of their fellows, no matter how heinous the crime. Murderers should be allowed to live as long as possible and work out their own salvation on behalf of the state. It is the only solution, for the stamp of Cain is on my brow and the brow of the government and the nation, as long as capital punishment is practised on this globe."

"When I am dead," he often said, "tell the people that the hangman suffered the tortures of hell on earth after he had killed a hundred persons. And I wish to God I would die right now. The strain is killing me."

Radclive did not live to officiate at another hanging. He was succeeded by a man named Arthur Ellis. During the past five years there have been hundreds of applicants for the job and some even offered Radclive money to allow them to go to the chamber of death in his stead.

One level tablespoonful of white flour and one tablespoonful of butter blended, will thicken half a pint of milk or water for sauces.

One and one half teaspoonfuls of baking powder to one pint of sifted flour is a good rule to follow, for biscuits and shortcakes.

TWELVE MILES OF LINE BUILT

Elk Lake Branch of T. & N. O. is Nearing Completion, and Will Soon Be Finished.

Announcement was made by the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway yesterday that twelve miles of their Elk Lake branch have now been completed. This new section of the T. & N. O. is to run from Earlton to Elk City, a distance of thirty miles. Eighteen miles of the line is still to be constructed. The line is scheduled to be finished and the first train run over it on December 1. The chief obstacle to be met with is the building of a steel bridge over the Montreal River about ten miles from Elk City. The steel for this is now being shipped up there and an early start is to be made on its construction.

DYING, SENT TO JAIL

WINDSOR, Aug. 29.—(Can. Press.)—William H. Baker, 64, of Picton, Ont., was found dead in his cell in Sandwich jail last night. About a month ago he was sentenced by Magistrate Leggatt to six months in the Central Prison. He was refused admission by Provincial Bailiff Ryan, who stated that Baker had been rejected at Ottawa and other places several times on account of ill health and being unable to work if placed in the Central Prison.

A jury which was empaneled brought in a verdict of death due to natural causes. They also censured the authorities for sentencing the man to jail when in their opinion he was in ill health.

FLOWER IDEAS.

A French combination evolved by a hostess was a basket of pink and blue hydrangeas, with red roses stuck amid them. The basket itself was painted light blue.

The handles of baskets for wedding breakfasts, generally of white flowers—sweet peas, pinks, roses—have tiny bouquets of orange blossoms made of white satin ribbon, tied with many loops of baby ribbon. The flowers are very easily fashioned, or one can use the regular artificial blossoms. The idea is good for any basket centerpiece.

A most attractive centerpiece was a low basket with first a fringe of ferns, then a mass of white flowers and over this, like a green mushroom, maidenhair fern. The white flowers peeping out from under the green cap was a pretty conceit.

A hostess stired of one-color schemes robbed her garden of all the brilliant, flaming flowers therein, and massed them in the center of the table loose, about an oriental brass lamp. She used yellow damask napery and white and gilt china, and called her party a harlequin luncheon. Snapping bonbon caps were the favors.

A tea-table set against a wall had a little rase trellis made of pots of rambler roses growing on lan-shaped trellises. Cold tea and cold consomme with wafers were served.

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ARTISTIC SPREADS.

Practical housekeepers who believe in saving themselves unnecessary work are using the "cottage" type of bedspread in lieu of those of heavier and more expensive materials like Marseilles and Irish linen. Really artistic are the bedspreads of English printed cotton showing a white ground and a pattern in quaint shades of various standard colors. And truly American are the blue and white spreads in Kentucky designs which are said to be non-fadable and equally enduring are the natural linen covers which have plain centers and colored borders. Rather more unique and just the thing for a summer sleeping room are the covers in German linen in Biedermeister design showing an allover connecting pattern in gold, white and black; green, white and black or blue, black and white. Any of these covers may be finished at top and bottom with fringe or a valance of one of the plain colors may be attached to their sides.

HOME HELPS.

Wiping the kitchen oilcloth with skimmed milk will be found almost as beneficial as treating the cloth with a coat of varnish. The milk can be wiped dry in a few minutes, but the varnish will not dry for several days.

White paint in a kitchen is both sanitary and pretty, but it should be treated with two coats of varnish, so that any grease can be washed off each time the kitchen is cleaned.

WORTH KNOWING.

When making desserts, allow one heaping teaspoonful of granulated sugar to each egg and half pint of milk; one tablespoonful of extract for each quart of liquid to be frozen and one teaspoonful of flavoring for each quart of boiled pudding or baked ones.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE.

C. W. LAKER, 3 Macpherson Avenue. Phone North 3071 and 5388.

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FIVE ACRES—One of the best homes; ten-roomed brick residence; barn, tool house, packing house, driving shed, poultry house; 600 peach trees, pears, apples, plums, grapes and small fruits; kitchen garden; house surrounded with lawn and flower beds; all implements, horse, buggy and wagon, all in running order; immediate possession; chickens and large apiary; to close an estate; rare opportunity for any gentleman.

20 ACRES—On Yonge street, close to city; about 6 in fruit; large orchard; the only piece of this size I know of; possession.

130 ACRES—Best on Yonge street; close to city. C. W. Laker. 245

Burlington Lake Front.

FOR SALE—Hamilton and Toronto finest suburbs, a number of choice lake front buildings; sites will double soon; some special homes, great bargains; also some up-to-date truck and fruit farms advancing rapidly; on line of radial, Burlington East, and some fine stock farms close to Toronto district. Address J. S. Boothman, Box 261, Balmy Beach, Burlington, Ont. ed7

HIGH PARK BARGAIN.

BEAUTIFUL 10-room residence, brand new, on grand scenic crescent, near Bloor street, with ravine view, overlooking High Park; square plan, five verandahs, two sun rooms, oak floors and stairs, hot water heating, combination gas and electric light, two fireplaces, windows in art lights; lot 50 x 150; low driveway in rear; room for garage; worth over $10,000; will sacrifice for immediate sale for $8500 (less than cost); moderate cash payment. Apply Canadian General Securities Corporation, Limited, 39 Scott street. Phone Adelaide 23. Night, Parkdale 1908. ed

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