

NEW ENGLAND SHOCKED AT HORRIBLE CRIME

Farmer Believed to Have Murdered His Family of Seven and Then Set Fire to the House—He Afterwards Committed Suicide at Sister's Home

PEMBROKE, N. H., Jan. 17.—What the authorities consider as the most appalling tragedy ever recorded in New Hampshire, was enacted in North Pembroke today. Following the destruction of the farm buildings of Chas. F. Ayer and the disappearance of seven members of Ayer's household this forenoon, and the suicide of Ayer this afternoon at the home of his sister in the town of Chichester, six miles distant, the announcement was made tonight by Thos. F. Clifford, county solicitor of Merrimack county, that there was a crime and that seven persons had been murdered and the farm house set on fire.

The theory of the county authorities is that Ayer was the murderer, but up to a late hour they had been unable to find any evidence to indicate the methods employed to wipe out the family. Whether the victims were shot or killed by other means, cannot be told until the medical referee has made an examination of the remains of the victims. Up to a late hour, but two of the charred fragments of the victims had been recovered, although persons who visited the scene of the fire thought that they observed two other trunks in the blazing ruins.

The victims of the tragedy were: Chas. F. Ayer, aged 43, killed himself by shooting; Mrs. Addie Ayer, his wife; Mrs. Isaac Lakeman, Ayer's mother-in-law; Flossie Ayer, aged 12; Alfred Ayer, aged 10; Bernice Ayer, aged 6; Andrew Ayer, aged 4; and a girl baby, all children of the Ayers. County Solicitor Clifford after investigating the fire as far as was possible tonight, stated that Ayer had undoubtedly murdered the entire family and later set fire to the house. The fire occurred about 10 o'clock in the forenoon. Before the flames were noticed by neighbors, who lived some distance from the farm, Ayer drove to the home of his sister, Mrs. George Bailey, who lives on the northward turnpike in the town of Chichester, about six miles northeast of his home. Ayer arrived at his sister's house just after 10 o'clock and had dinner. He remained at Mrs. Bailey's place during the afternoon. At 10 o'clock William Fowler, one of Ayer's nearest neighbors, went to the Bailey place and informed Ayer that his buildings had been burned. Ayer manifested some agitation, but made no statement as to what he would do. Instead he drew a revolver and pointing it at his right temple, fired, and fell unconscious. As soon as the members of the household recovered from the shock they sent for a physician, but nothing could be done to save the man's life and he expired tonight.

The selection of the town of Pembroke were notified of the tragic ending and their chairman, Mr. Johnson, immediately communicated with the authorities at Concord. A peculiar incident in connection with the case was the discovery of the fire by Henry J. Lakeman, while at work in the carriage factory of the Abbott-Dwelling Co. in Concord, a distance of five miles across country. Lakeman is a son of one of the women who perished in the fire, and was a brother-in-law of Ayer.

The Ayer place was located on a high hill and the smoke was distinctly seen in Concord. Lakeman thought that the fire might be on the Ayer farm, which for many years had been owned by the Lakeman family and as soon as he received confirmation of his fears from the county officials there he went to North Pembroke. As soon as Lakeman arrived at the ruins he made a careful investigation and found two bodies, both in the ell of the farmhouse. Both were so disfigured that identification was impossible. The remains of one person was that of an adult and the other that of a child. The ruins of the main house were so hot at a late hour tonight that the authorities decided to abandon an attempt to inspect the debris until daylight tomorrow.

At first there was no suspicion that murder had been committed, but when news that Ayer had shot himself was received the sheriff at Concord, George A. Kimball, was notified and he, together with Chief of Police James E. Hand of Concord, County Solicitor Clifford and other officials hastened to the scene.

The officials learned that none of the occupants of the Ayer house, with the exception of Ayer himself, had been seen by the neighbors since Monday night. The nearest neighbor, however, Edward Glidden, who is a brother of Mrs. Lakeman, Ayer's mother-in-law, lives several hundred yards distant. Glidden states that he saw a light in the house at 10 o'clock last night. Persons who passed the Ayer farm before the fire this morning say that the curtains of the house were drawn, an unusual circumstance, and that there were no signs of life about the premises.

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

THIS DEPARTMENT IS CONDUCTED BY THE W. C. T. U.

Tuesday of this week was the day appointed for the annual meeting of the St. John Women's Christian Temperance Union. The day was so stormy that the meeting was too small to transact much business. As the president, Mrs. Dearborn, is about to leave the city for a few months and it was the wish of the society to re-elect her, this was done, and the election of other officers and superintendents of departments was left for an adjourned meeting to be held on Tuesday, Jan. 30, or on Feb. 6th, as decided by the executive.

This annual meeting causes us to recall the fact that the W. C. T. U. of St. John was organized 23 years ago. An interesting account of its inception was given at a public meeting held ten years after, by Mrs. Turnbull, and to which will be seen when this column is published.

As it leads us to compare the work of the W. C. T. U. at that time and at the present it will be of interest to those who have been associated with the pioneer work of the society and those who have any knowledge of its present activities. And in this and another article we may be able to do so. Working in conjunction with those whose aim it appears to have been to check the sale of liquor it had the sympathy of the large majority of the citizens. This was 23 years ago. The work of the W. C. T. U. in the past has been to bring about a change in the law, and to make them more effective, so that homes may be brightened and temptations overcome. For this purpose we have called to service, and this teaching will be invaluable, enabling them to command high wages for skilled labor and to be a blessing to housekeepers.

No doubt our new organ, Canada's White Ribbon Bulletin, has been received and read by a number who read it. We will all agree, I think, that it is a very valuable paper. To those who have not seen it we will say that it is in book form containing 12 pages. The first four pages contain letters from the provincial presidents, and the rest of the paper is devoted to the work of the W. C. T. U. in the various provinces. A condensed report of the dominion convention will be found in the paper of good quality. The price, twenty-five cents a year, makes it well worth the price. It will be glad to have something new and bright for each issue, which is both interesting and instructive. A condensed report of the dominion convention will be found in the paper of good quality. The price, twenty-five cents a year, makes it well worth the price. It will be glad to have something new and bright for each issue, which is both interesting and instructive.

The Frederick W. C. T. U. officers elected last week were: Mrs. Wm. McKinnon, 1st vice-president; Mrs. (Rev.) J. B. Rogers, 2nd vice-president; Mrs. Annie Massie, 4th vice-president; Mrs. John Kilburn, 5th vice-president. For the last two weeks there has been no column. Hence, it will appear regularly on Thursday unless due notice is given.

BARNESVILLE, N. B., Jan. 10.—The Barnesville W. C. T. U. met at 7 o'clock on Tuesday evening, Jan. 10th. The Bible lesson was from the 12th chapter of Cor. A very interesting reading upon the subject of prayer was given by the pastor, Mr. Curry, one of our members, and after a few comments, prayer was answered in by the pastor. Our meeting was poorly attended, but we trust God's blessing will rest upon our feeble efforts. A report was given and help sent to the Frances Willard home, also two comfort bags sent to the sailors' mission, also two parcels of good reading matter. After the meeting closed, a sumptuous treat was provided by the kind hostess and daughter. Our next meeting will be to observe the annual day of prayer, meeting to be held at the home of Mrs. Lawson, on the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 16th. Scripture lesson: Mat. 28: 36-46. Business topic: Work of our Union and of the work at large. May God's richest blessing attend the efforts being put forth to battle for the right.

BRIG ATALANTA
ASHORE AT ROCKLAND

J. Willard Smith received a brief despatch last night stating that the brig Atalanta had gone ashore near Rockland. The Atalanta, which is 320 tons, is commanded by Capt. Covert. She sailed from St. John four or five days ago with a cargo of fathoms from Stetson, Carter & Co. of New York. The Atalanta is owned in Bermuda and Smith is the agent in St. John. No particulars of the damage done have been received.

along the open road no dear pilgrims, but the weary professional of tedious burden bearing!

While thus our journeyman is struggling along the open road, burden, fear, trembling and all, let us notice the graceful fact that he is alone, but has never the traveler's attendant, and can hardly refrain from a sharp quarrel with Wordsworth because he makes the journey of youth through life a recession. To be sure, he allows that as the youth travels rarer farther, from the east he still is nature's priest.

And by the vision splendid,
Is on his way attendant.

But he declares that with approaching manhood the vision departs:

At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day.

The true man, who is working out his own salvation, perceives no such thing! The poetry is beautiful, but "vision splendid" becomes more and more splendid as the earnest soul "sees into the life of things."

One story of the open road strikes the true, clear note in declaring regarding the road:

I believe you are not all that is here;
I believe that much unseen is also here.

It declares that there are great companions; that we belong to them and are not alone. Paul is not content that either when he declares that "God is working in you"; He is the author of every vision splendid for youth and man. He is the great companion; and is the traveler's attendant and is continually on the road! The great and pitiable tragedy of life is that men do not, and will not, really believe in God. Who says them upon the open road! One of the most stimulating of modern writers upon them remarks in a preface: "The undividedness of the natural, and the unnaturalness of the artificial, is the great heresy of popular religion. The majority of people God is somewhere, to be sure; but not near enough to share the vicissitudes of the open road and the vicissitudes of a traveler's companion! Then He is no God for men, nor can He meet men in the deep necessities of their souls, for these all arise in their experiences along the road. Paul has another persuasion. "He is working in you" is his belief. "Mrs. Robert Louise Stevenson was upon one occasion making a steamer journey to visit an island reserved for those afflicted with leprosy. As a fellow traveler she noticed a Sister of Charity who had been assigned to life long duty at this hard and distressing field among the lepers and, who, though not unwilling to fulfill the service, could not refrain from tears at the thought of her inevitable separation from all her loved ones. Bending kindly and gently over her, Mrs. Stevenson said: "Do not weep. God is with you and God will be with you in the quality and magnitude of the motive they can summon! Whether life with a pack on one's back is worth living or not, depends not on the size of the pack, but on the strength of the individual's spirit."

This is the confession of the song:
Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am filled with them and I will fill them in return.

"Delicious burdens!" "Nonsense!" No, not nonsense; the very truth of God! Delicious, because being filled with them, I can fill them in return! They yield to a sufficient motive and instead of being my heavy burden, become my hope-giving inspiration! Capitalize your burden! Make it yield compound interest! Precisely this is what Paul means by working out your own salvation with fear and trembling; he exhorts to no craven, boot-licking spirit. He is no coward! He takes fear and trembling up into his glorious place, he raises them to the throne of power, till fear becomes the incentive of a giant inspiration and trembling the expectation of a quivering hope. Such fear and trembling is the very essence of fidelity, of courage and of heroism.

There are multitudes of folk upon the open road who are like the vain idols described by the Psalmist. "They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they hear not; they have ears, but they hear not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not."

They bring to the thoroughfare partial rather than complete equipment; they content themselves with mediocrity; willingly they indulge illusions; their consciences have been so cursoriously trained that they no longer speak in the stern tones of stinging rebuke, no longer as life, soft, warm, fuzzy, they ask no more.

This challenge from the song would evoke only a smile of incredulity;
Listen! I will be honest with you,
I do not offer the old smooth prizes,
But offer rough new prizes.

Really, they cannot offer a good excuse for living! They merely exist! But there are other multitudes upon the road whose eyes are not hidden, and who see the vision befall; their ears are not stopped; they hear the ringing summons; their feet and hands are busy in eager service; their hearts are warm, tender and throbbing with the impulses of a generous sympathy. Life for them is a fine, high and inspiring chance. It is the chance for everlasting life. It is the chance for something interesting and they are inspired to constant watching and endeavor by the stimulating fear that they may miss some golden opportunity, disappear some confident expectation, or be disadvantaged by some royal occasion for strengthening their reserves. To harness one's fears and make them haul the chariot of one's supreme life salvation! Burdens become delicious when one has learned how to master them the common carriers of the mighty determinations and aspirations of the soul. Burdens are the raw material from which, in working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling, benefits are made.

The "rough, raw prizes," not the "old smooth prizes," have engaging attraction for those who can summon the mightier motive and make the journey

Cameras! I give you my hand,
I give you my love more precious than money;
I give you myself before preaching or song;
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

SERMON. Song of the Open Road.

By Dr. Nehemiah Boynton.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Jan. 14.—Dr. Nehemiah Boynton, preached on "The Song of the Open Road." Dr. Boynton took as his text, Philippians 3: 13: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Dr. Boynton said:

Paul was a great, buoyant, out-in-the-open spirit. He had windows on all four sides of his "earthly house of this tabernacle," and he was familiar with the landscape looking in all directions. He permitted no single dimension of life to measure for him the significance of the growing wonder of existence. He saw "clearly and he saw whole." Little rivers were not without their charm for him, but the beckoning sea, where go the ships, "where winds blow, home sweet home. He could domesticate himself in a dungeon and with his pen, his manuscripts and his books spirit himself away from the prison to a "land in which it seemed always afternoon." Oh, the emancipation of a breezy, bristling book! What rest to the weary workman! What freedom to the shut in and enslaved! What liberty to the captives and opening of prisons to them that are bound! Paul was a sailor, breathing fearlessly the mountain high billows; he was a soldier fighting the "sea of faith"; he was a prospector, transmuting with his own veins the life blood of the master spirits, living luxuriously upon the thoughts of the mighty and quieting his spirit with the sweet cadence of his poetry.

No book lovers' library could have a more appreciative patron than Paul, who could quote from the masters of the Greeks, "as certain of your own poets has said," and who much as he esteemed "Timothy," he did not neglect to bring him his forgotten cloak to keep his body warm, even more urgently requested "the books, and especially the parchments," to keep his soul aflame!

Fancy Paul, with his literary tastes, a modern library, fastening his soul upon some compelling volume which clothes the truths of the ages in the attire of present day attractiveness. He chances to open a volume of Whitman and reads his "Song of the Open Road," as he proclaims you can see in his flashing eye the greeting of an unexpected recognition:

Afoot and lighthearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose;
Henceforth I ask not good fortune;
I myself am good fortune;
Henceforth I seek not kings;
I myself am kingship;
Done with indoor complaints, libraries,
Querulous criticisms,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

"Here is a kinsman of mine," he is saying to himself; "a distant relative, not all of whose writing I can approve, to be sure, but this song of the 'Open Road' is a modern masterpiece precious to me and which many times I have voiced. This rippling, swinging song is my 'work out your own salvation' set to music. It is another way of saying to me, 'Work out your own salvation' what I said to the men of my own time.' If this can in any sense be real it is surely worth our while to search for the companion truth in the text and in the song, while attempting their collaboration.

As a first venture in this endeavor we may observe that the shop for working out one's own salvation is upon the open road.

Just look at the open road itself. Here it is so broad, well-built, macadamized; to travel it is a luxury, to exist on it is a necessity. It narrows and winds; still it is open, only it leads "over moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent" and the traveler will require strong thighs and a stout heart. What a commanding prospect from these lofty heights! What a cold, damp chill in that low, forbidding ravine!

"That will show me the path of life," exclaimed the inspired bard, in the ecstasy of his confidence. "What did he see?" The same "long, brown" road, on which our eyes rest at this very moment. The open road, with its twists and turns, its steep hills, its winding trails through the meadows, with here a modest forget-me-not and there a flaming passion flower, and yonder no flower at all, nothing but sage brush—the open road is the path of life and the only path of life for every one of us.

Just see the throngs upon the road! The man without a country is jostling the man with a hoe. Here is the man from Glengarry; also from China, Italy, Poland. One of our city kindergartens counts children of twenty-one different nationalities. Kim is passing Tiny Tim and Tiny Tim waves his crutch in glee. Flagin and Bishop Walsome have just looked each other in the eye. There goes hunger, lean and gaunt, and there, would you believe it, is Epicurus himself. The laughter of Innocence and the leer of integrity mingle in the common din and roar! A wedding party has just been stopped to allow a funeral procession to pass; nothing escapes the open road. Here are churches and schools, factories and shops, hospital and asylums, jails and every possible sort and kind of institution. Honesty and shame use the same sidewalk! The feet of goodwill and evil purpose, confident success, disheartening failure, courageous endeavor, press the same flagstones. Here upon this open road, it is all you must work out your own salvation. In the midst of this thoroughfare you must show the world how a man was made to walk. It is of no avail to retire within your home, close the door and draw the shutters. The influence of the street will sit in like the dust through closed windows. A closed carriage will not deliver your soul. "I am part of all that I have met," said a wise man of yesterday. So are you! Only by meeting life upon

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