

# WILL PROVANT'S REVENGE.

BY W. T. SPEIGHT

## CHAPTER III.

But what was the bright object Will Provant was carrying in one hand, which caught and flung back the light with such a cold steel glitter? Bessie was nearly sure that it was a weapon of some kind. Will now went forward a little way, and then came to a halt where the level ground broke away abruptly at the edge of the gorge. For full two minutes he stood thus, as immovable as if chiselled out of black marble; then flinging one hand in the air, as if his mind were finally made up, he plunged down the side of the gorge and was lost from view. But while he was standing thus there had come a sudden flash of lightning, and by its aid Bessie had been able to make out what the bright object was which had puzzled her so much. It was neither more nor less than a handsaw—a carpenter's common handsaw! What could he possibly want with such an article as that in Gripside Scour at ten o'clock at night?

No sooner had Will disappeared than Bessie ran forward, and kneeling on one knee at the extreme edge of the gorge, and grasping with one hand the stump of an old thorn she craned her body half over, trying to pierce with her eyes the depths of blackness below her. The sides of the gorge were steep, and had been rendered slippery by the recent rains, and for any stranger to have ventured down them in the dark, especially while the river was in flood, would have been to court almost certain destruction; but Will Provant was as active as a squirrel, and had doubtless made himself acquainted beforehand with every step of the way he intended to take.

Again a flash; and yet another. By this time Bessie's eyes had become so far used to the lightning as to be capable of receiving impressions with almost photographic quickness. There was Provant again; but by this time he was under the bridge, and in the act of swinging himself up on to one of the cross-beams. What could he possibly want among the timbers of the bridge at that hour of the night, or, indeed, at any other hour? Bessie was more puzzled than ever. Keeping her eyes fixed on the point where she had seen him last, she waited for the fourth flash. It came and was gone in a breath. In the interim between the flashes Provant had worked his way among the cross-beams and under-pinning timbers of the bridge, till he was now full over the turbid, swirling river. Seated astride a horizontal beam, he was in the act of sawing through one of the huge balks which formed the main supports of the bridge. Then, in one vivid mental flash, the man's diabolical plot stood clearly revealed to Bessie. He was about to saw through one or more of the vital foundations of the structure, in the hope that it would collapse under the weight and stress of the next train that should attempt to cross it, and so hurl the latter to destruction! And the next train was "No. 5 Down Goods," which was driven by her sweetheart! A cold chill of horror shook her from head to foot, and the words Provant had whispered in her ear a few nights before echoed mckingly in her brain.

Her immediate impulse was to rush down the side of the scour and call out to Provant that she had seen him, and knew on what nefarious task he was engaged; but she was doubtful whether her voice would reach him above the roar of the river, and even if he did, he was not the man to heed it. Before she could reach the station, three-quarters of a mile away, and cause the telegraph to be set in motion, Steve's train would be due; it would be too late to avert a catastrophe. Then all at once she remembered Seth Gedge, whom she knew, as she more or less knew every one connected with the station. It was his duty to signal the trains; the distance signal for the trains coming from Swallowfield was at the opposite end of the bridge, consequently, all Seth would have to do would be to put it on at "danger"; and Steve, in obedience to its warning, would bring his train to a stand before it reached the fatal spot.

The moment this thought had formulated itself in her mind she turned and sped towards the signal-box as fast as her feet could carry her. Up the stairs she sprang and opened the door without waiting to knock. Seth was there certainly, but to all appearance fast asleep, his head resting on his arms, and his body bent forward over the little table on which he took his meals. This was something so unprecedented, and involved such a gross breach of duty, that Bessie stood for a moment and stared in astonishment. Then she went forward, and laying a hand on Seth's shoulder, called him by name; then she shook him and shouted in his ear, and then she tried to raise his head; but the moment her hold relaxed it fell forward into its former position. Bessie gazed round her despairingly, and as she did so her eye was caught by a cup on a shelf, from which a peculiar odour seemed to emanate. She took it up; there was a little dark liquid in it which smelt like nothing she had ever smelt before. The truth flashed across her: Seth Gedge had been drugged! Doubtless, the signals were set at "line clear," and there was nothing to hinder "No. 5 Down Goods" from rushing to its destruction. Bessie turned so faint and giddy that she had to sit down for a moment or two to keep herself from falling.

Presently her eye glanced at the little clock by which Seth timed his trains. In twelve minutes "No. 5 Down Goods" was due to pass Scargill station. Her helplessness half-maddened her. She sprang to her feet, clasping the fingers of one hand hard within those of the other, and cried aloud: "What shall I do?—what shall I do?" If only she had known how to reverse the distance signal so as to show the real light in place of the white one! But even had she been strong enough to manipulate the heavy levers, the mode of working them was an utter mystery to her. And to think that the life of Steve and that of his fireman, who, as she knew, had a wife and two little ones at home, should be dependent on such a simple thing as the automatic change of a white light to a red one! Again from her lips broke the cry: "What shall I do?"

As if in answer to it, what seemed to her like a dazzling wave of light swept next moment across her brain, and all at once there was revealed to her a way by which her lover's life might be saved. She rose to her feet, her lips firm set, and a glow of fine enthusiasm shined through the crystalline depths of her dark-blue eyes. A few seconds later she was speeding like a few seconds

Gripside Bridge. Below her she could hear the hoarse muttering of the white-lipped waters; the night-breeze sang plaintively through the telegraph wires overhead; there was a rumble of distant thunder; but penetrating all other sounds, and altogether a thing apart, her excited fancy seemed to hear the ceaseless grating of the sharp teeth of Will Provant's saw as they bit their way through the foundations of the bridge. Ah, what a flash was that!

At length the bridge was crossed and Bessie breathed more freely. Fifty yards further on was the bourn for which she was bound. But already the breeze brought to her straining ears the faint far-off pulsing of the engine of the oncoming train. The sound lent new wings to her feet. Light and slim though she was, the loose ballast gave way beneath her, more than once she stumbled and fell forward on her hands, but still she sped bravely on. At length, breathless and exhausted, she reached the foot of the semaphore, which towered far above her, its huge cyclopean eye at once a beacon and a warning, glowing far into the night. Here Bessie was fain to rest for half a minute, in order to gather breath before beginning to climb the steep iron ladder which gave access to the platform fixed near the summit of the semaphore for the use of the porter who had charge of the lamps. The deep, laboured throbbing of the engine was now plainly audible. Bessie drew a fuller breath than common and began the ascent of the ladder.

Up she went slowly, step by step, sadly hampered by her garments. The semaphore was one of the tallest in use, it being needful that its signals should be seen over the shoulder of a certain hill a little way beyond it where there was a sharp bend of the line. Higher and higher climbed Bessie, never once venturing to look down, lest she might turn dizzy. At length the tiny platform was safely reached, and not one moment too soon. With a deep sigh of thankfulness that was almost a sob, Bessie dragged herself on to it. There was the lamp within reach of her hand, with a great shining fan of white light radiating from it into the darkness. Without the loss of a second, Bessie set about doing that which she had come to do. With nimble fingers, which yet trembled a little, she undid the knot which held in its place the thick silk handkerchief she had tied round her neck before leaving home, which she had bought only that afternoon as a present for her lover. Then she shook it out, and proceeded to fix it as a screen or curtain in front of the lamp, tying two ends of it behind. The colour of the handkerchief was a rich crimson and the light shining through it showed as a deep blood-red. Such was the danger signal improvised by Bessie in order to save her sweetheart's life!

She sank down half-fainting to wait for whatever might happen next. The sound of the steady oncoming rush of No. 5 seemed as though it were gradually filling the spaces of the night. Surely, surely the signal must be visible to Steve and his mate by now! Half a minute more and they will be round the curve. At last! Three short, sharp whistles—a summons to the guard to put on all the break-power at his command. The signal has been seen, and they are saved!

And now the head-light of the engine could be seen shining in the distance like a huge glowworm as the train came sweeping round the curve, its braked wheels, tracked by sparks, grinding out a horrible discord, as though it were some half-human monster venting its impotent rage at its enforced stoppage. Then, loud and shrill, came a long ear-piercing whistle, intended, as Bessie knew, for an intimation to Seth Gedge that No. 5 was waiting for the danger signal to be taken off. Slowly, and still more slowly the train crept on, till presently it came to a stand within a dozen yards of the semaphore. Then Bessie, snatching her handkerchief from off the lamp, stood up on the platform and waved it wildly over her head. Jumping off his engine, Steve ran to the foot of the semaphore.

"Who's that up there?" he shouted; "and what fool's trick are you playing with the signals?"

"Steve—Steve—it is I—Bessie!" came the response in the voice he knew and loved so well; and yet it seemed incredible, and he could hardly believe that his ears were not playing him false. His hand caught at his throat, as though something were choking him.

"Oh, my lass, what art thou doing there?" he cried; and then, without waiting for an answer, he began to mount the ladder in frantic haste.

Bessie was kneeling on one knee; and the first thing she did as soon as Steve was within reach of her was to fling her arms round his neck and strain him to her. "Thank Heaven, oh, thank Heaven!" she exclaimed, and then for a few moments hysterical sobs choked her utterance.

Steve, still standing on one of the top-most rungs of the ladder, felt there was no room for him on the platform, so he stroking her hair and kissing her cheek, and waiting patiently till she should be able to tell him all that he was dying to know. It was only two or three minutes that the most that he had to wait. Then Bessie told her tale in the fewest possible words. Steve remained silent for a few moments after she had done. In truth, he knew not what to say. His was not one of those nimble intellects which profess to solve at a glance any problem which may be put before them, although as often as not the solution may be wrong.

"The first thing to be done is to get back to terra firma," said Steve at length. He picked himself somewhat on his scholarly side of most of his class.

This seemed to Bessie one of those things which are easier to propose than to carry out. But Steve undertook to descend the ladder slowly and carefully, taking one cautious step after another. Both guard and fireman were waiting at the foot of the ladder, burning with curiosity; and the former threw the light of his hand-lamp on Bessie's face the moment she sprang from Steve's arm to the ground.

"Why, Miss Ford, who on earth thought of seeing you!" he exclaimed. Then to Steve: "But what's up, mate? I'm fairly capped."

"There's deviltry in it," said Jim Baines; "that's what's up," answered Steve; "and if

it hadn't been for Bessie here, most likely none of us would have been alive at this moment."

A few words put his auditors in possession of the main facts as told him by Bessie. "It's the most infernal scheme I ever heard tell of," said the guard. "The 'down empties' is due in twenty minutes. I must run back at once for a quarter of a mile and plant three or four fog-signals, else they'll smash into us as sure as eggs in eggs. —But what's thy plan, Steve?"

"My plan is to leave Mike here in charge of the engine, while I cut across the bridge, rouse them up at the station, and stop the 'up minerals,' which is due in half an hour."

"That's the ticket," said Baines with a nod of approval. "I'm off like a shot. We shall have something to talk about to-morrow mates."

Steve turned to Bessie. "Thou'st better stay here with Mike till I come back," he said, lapsing into the familiar thee and thou, as he generally did in moments of excitement. "I'll not be gone longer than I can help."

"No, no, Steve; you must take me with you," pleaded the girl.

"Come along, then; but thou must put thy best foot foremost." There was no time for argument. After a few last words to Mike, Steve tucked one of Bessie's arms under his and started off down the "six-foot" in the direction of the bridge. The lightning flashes, although still as frequent, were no longer quite so vivid as they had been.

The intervening space had been traversed, and Steve and Bessie had advanced some distance along the bridge itself, when their ears were taken by a dull ominous roaring sound which seemed to come to them from up the valley beyond Scargill. Momentarily it grew louder and more distinct; whatever it might be, it was evidently coming towards them; involuntarily, they stood still to listen. Nearer and nearer came the sound, which was now as if the roar and rush of the Windle when in flood were intensified twenty-fold. As they stood thus, their straining gaze bent up the valley, expecting they knew not what, there came a long quivering flash, and by its light they saw a huge solid wall of water sweeping down the gorge towards them.

"Oh Steve, what is it?" she cried, clinging more tightly in her terror to her lover's arm.

"Back, back—or we are lost!" was Steve's answer—and with that he swung her off the ground, and making no more to do than if she were a feather-weight, he raced back with her to the solid ground beyond the bridge. Scarcely had he set her on her feet when the liquid wall dashed itself full against the framework of the old bridge. A shiver, almost like that of some sentient creature, ran through it from end to end; then above the fierce roar and swirl of the flood could be heard the cracking and splintering of the great ribs of timber, mingled with a noise of tearing and rending, and the same instant, dominating all other sounds, came the shrill, agonised cry of a human soul in agony—a cry unlike all other cries. It came and was gone as though one might draw a long breath. It trembled through Bessie's brain as she clung trembling to Steve, and many a night afterwards it startled her in her dreams.

Another flash, and by it Steve saw that the heretofore solid structure was rent in twain, and that a huge piece of it had vanished utterly, so that there was now a gap several yards in width between one side of the bridge and the other. "It must be the Hoybeach Reservoir that has burst," said Steve in a low, awed voice. "There's been talk for some days back of its being in a dangerous condition owing to the heavy rains."

All possibility of crossing the bridge was now at an end. Of course there was a chance that the catastrophe might have roused Seth Gedge from his stupor, and that he might have had his wits sufficiently about him to remember that his first duty was to block both lines. At that hour of the night the station would be shut up, and all the officials, except the signal-man on duty for the night, have gone home, so that unless Seth were in a position to communicate with the latter, there was not much chance of the mineral train being intercepted in time. All this Steve saw clearly in his mind as he stood there for one solemn minute. But one chance, and that a faint one, was left him of being able to stop the "up minerals."

"There's nothing for it but to go back and be as sharp about it as we can," he said.

Then, as they hurried to the train, Steve told Bessie his plan. He had called to mind that close by the semaphore there was a crossing from one line to the other, put there for hunting purposes, and this it was which he was now about to utilise for his purpose. As soon as the engine was reached, Bessie was assisted on to it, and as soon as Mike had been picked up, Steve began to run back along the up-line towards Brimley Station, four miles away. The engine kept on whistling as a signal to Jim Baines, and presently they could discern the waving of his hand-lamp, although he himself was invisible in the darkness. Speed was slackened, to allow of the news being told him, after which all steam was put on, and away they went at a pace which at any other time would have frightened Bessie half out of her wits; but during the last hour she had gone through so much that for the time being she felt as if nothing could ever terrify her again.

Brimley was reached a few minutes later, where the telegraph was at once put in operation, fortunately in time to intercept the mineral train at Rushcliffe, the station next past Scargill.

Little more remains to be told. It was the bursting of the Hoybeach Reservoir, as Steve had surmised, that set free the immense mass of water, the flood upon a flood, which swept away a great part of Gripside Bridge. It was the cause of a great deal of property being damaged and destroyed; but Will Provant's was the only life sacrificed. His body was never found; but the handsaw was picked up a week or two later, not far from the spot where he had attempted to work out the desperate scheme of vengeance which recoiled so terribly on himself. An examination proved that before being overtaken by his fate, he had succeeded in sawing more than half-way through two of the great centre beams of the bridge.

Seth Gedge lost his situation, and deservedly so. He acknowledged that, as a relief to the monotony of his "spell of night-duty," he had more than once allowed Provant to keep him company in his box for an hour or two. On the night of the accident he had been suffering from faceache, and Provant had persuaded him to drink some-

thing which he had mixed for him as being an infallible remedy. After that, he had remembered nothing more for several hours.

Bessie's nervous system did not wholly recover its tone for several months, and for many weeks to come she suffered so much from sleeplessness as totally to unfit her for her duties in Mrs. Fountain's shop. The wedding, however, took place at Christmas as arranged. It is pleasant to be able to record that the railway company presented Bessie with a purse containing a substantial token of their recognition of her services; while shortly afterwards Steve's ambition was gratified by his removal to headquarters and his appointment as driver of one of the main-line expresses. Lastly, it may be mentioned that the crimson silk handkerchief was carefully treasured as a memento of a never-to-be-forgotten night.

[THE END.]

## European and Canadian Weather.

Hitherto when speaking of Winnipeg at this season of the year Ontarians have been wont to draw their garments closer about them as if to kill the chill which the very mention of the name imparted, and when speaking of Italy to almost imagine they felt the gentle breezes and heard the birds singing in the leafy bowers. What they will be disposed to do in the future is very uncertain. The clerk of the weather has been behaving in a manner so eccentric as to upset all former calculations. While all Europe is suffering from such cold as has not been known for three quarters of a century, and sunny Italy is cooled down to an extent of which history knows no parallel; while frost has been king for now nearly two months in the United Kingdom and has wrapped the whole land in his white mantle and bound up the canals and streams, the Canadian Northwest has been experiencing what for that region is an open winter, and in Manitoba the weather has been really mild. The same paper which publishes the news that much suffering is being experienced in England and on the Continent because of the cold, that mayors of cities and local boards are organizing for the relief of the famishing and starving multitudes, reports that "in Winnipeg yesterday the weather was summerlike." How scientists will yet explain this general reversal of expectations we must wait and see. Meantime the opportunity is afforded to earn the blessing bestowed on those who minister to a brother's need.

## The New Examination Scheme.

The action of the Senate of Toronto University in accepting the High School and Leaving Examination as the junior matriculation (pass and honor) is another step in the direction of bringing all the schools of the Province over which the government exercises direct control into one complete and regular system. The assurances of the Minister of Education that the course of study in the High Schools on which the leaving examinations shall be based, shall be the junior matriculation work for pass and honors as prescribed by the Senate of the University of Toronto, and the safeguards that by the new arrangement have been thrown around the work of examination remove all ground for further opposition to the scheme. The result will be that the country will be saved the expenses involved in an extra examination, such as preparing papers and seeing examiners, and that those students who are looking forward to a collegiate course in the Provincial University will be spared the trying labor of reviewing their work during the summer months, at a time when study presses most heavily, and when those who have wrought hard during the previous months are in need of a little respite from their heavy labors. It is to be hoped that the other universities of the Province will follow the example of the University of Toronto, and that soon the fall examinations for junior matriculation will be done away with except in such cases as supplemental examinations may be held.

## American Mint Law.

An interesting case touching the constitutionality of a certain regulation of the United States mint service is likely soon to come before the American courts. According to the existing regulation no private individual can have silver bullion coined on his own account. If he has bullion which he desires to convert into coin he can only do so by exchanging it for money already coined, receiving therefor a certain amount per ounce of fineness. It is clear that this regulation, by depressing the market value of silver bullion, renders it possible for the government to realize a margin of profit between the market and mint value of the silver. As a matter of fact this margin, which is technically called "seigniorage" is at present almost twenty-six cents per ounce, the market value of silver bullion being 103½ cents per ounce fine, while the mint value of an ounce is 129.25 cents. The parties who are about to test the matter hold that the constitution and laws of the United States provide for the coining of silver bullion for the benefit of private individuals, that in fact they do not leave it optional with the government whose officers shall receive the silver bullion and coin it "into silver dollars of the weight of 412½ grains, Troy standard silver, for the use and benefit of the depositors, and without unnecessary delay." The case is unique and the decision will be waited for with considerable curiosity.

## A Wonderful Air Ship.

An airship two hundred feet in length, is said to be nearing completion at the shipyard, if we may so call it, at the American Mount Carmel. It is promised that in a few days this novel craft will be sailing through the air on its trial trip, which is planned to take in St. Louis, Chicago and New York. The ship is being built by a company which is reported to have a capital of \$5,000,000, which they propose to invest in the manufacture of ships for travelling in the air. Wonderful vistas are opened up to the imaginative mind by this new invention, travelling in which dust and smoke and heat and pitchiness and run-offs will no longer vex, annoy, maim and kill. But practical persons will ask, What advantage will air ships, or flying machines, serve? Certainly, to quote the words of another, scientists would be deeply interested in them; the rich might conceivably use them as luxurious playthings; adventurous cranks would play mad pranks with them, not "before high heaven," but in high heaven; and the managers of agricultural fairs and Fourth-of-July entertainments would hail them with joy as the legitimate heir to that old favorite, the balloon ascension.

## The Cattle Trade.

It is not improbable that as a result of last week's investigation at Montreal into the cattle export trade of Canada, legislation will be passed during the ensuing session, tending to improve the conditions under which the trade shall henceforth be carried on. Among the improvements suggested by the various witnesses, who included in their number steamship agents, marine underwriters and cattle exporters, are these: That at least 2 feet 8 inches space be allotted to each animal—the space now allotted in some instances being only 2 feet 6 inches—that no deck loads be allowed after a certain date in the autumn, that all the dead freight be loaded before the cattle with steam fans cattle ships be provided with cattle men placed in charge of the cattle while crossing the ocean, that those in charge of the cattle be obliged to enrol themselves as members of the ship's crew, and like the crew be responsible to the captain of the ship, etc. Coming from those who are supposed to be best qualified to speak on the subject it may be presumed that many of these suggestions will be incorporated into the present law. It must not be inferred, however, from these suggestions that the cattle trade is at present in a demoralized condition, and that no effort is being made to insure the comfort of the animals in their voyage across the ocean. The fact is, the leading lines of steamships which cater for this trade have, of late years, been paying particular attention to these matters. How far they have succeeded may be judged by the record of the past few years. Tables furnished at the investigation by the Allan, Beaver, Reford, Temperley, and Ross lines prove that the rate of mortality has been very small indeed. By the Allan line, from 1886 to 1890 inclusive, there were shipped 130,324 head of cattle, and the total losses amounted to 440 head, or a percentage of only .30 of one per cent. By the Beaver line for the ten years from 1881 to 1890 there were shipped 98,166 cattle and 159,001 sheep. The losses were only 349 cattle and 2,861 sheep, or a percentage for ten years of cattle .34 of one per cent., and sheep 1.79 per cent. By the Donaldson line from 1882 to 1890 there were shipped 81,870 head of cattle, and the total loss was 641 head, or .78 of one per cent., and deducting loss in the heavy November hurricanes, the average loss for the nine years was only .36 of one per cent. By the Temperley and Ross lines there were shipped from 1882 to 1890, 27,309 head, and the loss was 568 head, or 2.08 per cent. Deducting the loss in the exception of hurricanes, the average loss for the eight years was only .53 of 1 per cent. The Thomson line shipped 61,263 head from 1882 to 1890, of which 431 head were lost, or .67 of 1 per cent. It will be seen from these valuable figures that the loss amongst Canadian cattle is remarkably small, and this is perhaps the best evidence that could be given of the care taken of the cattle. In the light of these figures only the person who has prejudged the case and has made up his mind that he will not be convinced of the contrary will contend that the live stock trade should be prohibited, as is contemplated by the following clause of Mr. Plimssoll's amendment to the Live Cattle Shipment Act introduced last year into the Imperial parliament and delayed until investigation could be made:

Live cattle shall not, after January 1, 1891, be landed at any port in the United Kingdom from any ship, whether British or Foreign, from any port or place west of the 12th parallel of west longitude. Any cattle so landed in contravention of this section shall be forfeited to her Majesty, and may be seized and detained by any officer of customs or of the board of trade. The board of trade may from time to time make regulations exempting from this section any description of cattle not imported for the purpose of sale for food.

It is stated that Mr. Plimssoll's views have been considerably modified by what he heard at Montreal, and that he has already declared that the trade in "stockers," which constitutes 60 per cent. of the Canadian live cattle trade, must not be interfered with. It is to be hoped that the Imperial Parliament will see the injustice of prohibiting this trade which, according to Mr. Kennedy, a live stock exporter, would mean a loss to the Canadian farmers of about \$2,300,000 a year.

## The Southern Race Problem.

One of the many schemes proposed by those who have spoken and written upon the Southern race problem is that efforts should be made to induce the negroes who now occupy the congested districts east of the Mississippi to emigrate to the States and Territories to the west where labor is in greater demand, and where elbow room is more abundant. Whether the suggestion is in any measure desirable for the movement referred to below does not appear. "A Topeka, Kansas, despatch says: Rev. B. F. Foster, coloured, who was a candidate for State auditor on the people's party ticket, has come to Kansas City with 20 families of coloured people from Kemper county, Miss., en route to Hennessy, Oklahoma. Those families number about 100 people. Mr. Foster says:—This is but the beginning of a tremendous exodus of coloured people from the South. Thousands of them will leave the Southern States within the next 60 days. We look upon Oklahoma as our peaceful heaven, where political ostracism is unknown, and where every man can cast his ballot for his choice without fear from any source."

## A Strange Will.

The man of the story who sought to make his peace with heaven by bequeathing a handsome amount to the church has his counterpart in the person of Benjamin Deming of Revere, Mass., lately deceased, who though an exceedingly profane man during his life has been found to have willed the bulk of his estate of more than \$100,000 to charities, the board of Ministerial Aid being the principal defence. This strange inconsistency with the habits of a lifetime was used as a basis for a will contest on the ground that the testator was not of sound mind when he bequeathed his property. With this contention the Judge agreed and disallowed the will. Whether any other reason for concluding that the old man was insane was urged, doth not appear; but if the attempt to offset a life of wrong doing by the performance of some good work or works is an evidence of unsoundness, then verily the number of madmen is legion, and the difference between the subject of this article and that of thousands of his fellows is one of degree and not of kind.