

"Let us feel about us," said Colby, "and see if we cannot find some bank beside the road where we can lay the body out of this terrible mire, while we seek aid at the hands of some charitable citizen in this neighborhood." They immediately set about the search, and were pleased to find within a few feet of the body, a high knoll at the foot of a tree or stump—they could not tell which, in the darkness, where the body might be laid until they could find help to remove it. Again feeling their way in the mud with their hands they soon found the body, and taking it in their arms, they made their way with it to the place they had found to lay it. As they straightened out the limbs as best they could in that awful blackness, they were startled by hearing words, very faint and low, from the lips of him whom they supposed dead. Bowing their ears to catch if possible his faintest breath, they both heard and fully understood a few closing words of that sentence so well known to all Master Masons, which tells a Brother Mason of the dire extremity and distress to which he who utters it is reduced.

Colby and Newton were Brethren of the mystic tie, and well knew the duty that thus fell upon them. "Oh dear," cried Newton, "what can we do, here is our Brother, whoever he may be, and from the very portals of the grave, he calls upon us for aid and assistance? Oh! what shall we do?" "There is but one thing we can do," said Colby, "and that is for you to go the best way you can, in search of aid, while I remain here with our dying Brother," and as he said it, he calmly seated himself upon the wet ground, and drawing the strange, but dying brother's head up to his bosom, he wrapped his thin coat about him as best he could, and prepared himself for his lonely vigil in the darkness and storm, with the dying or the dead, while his friend Newton should seek the help they so much needed. Newton turned to start upon the discharge of his part of the painful duty, but he had scarcely stumbled more than three or four steps from his starting place, when his ears were greeted by a very merry ringing laugh, full and loud as if coming from many voices, backed by many happy hearts. The laugh seemed to come from a house a little to the left of the road, and at no great distance from them, but the light from which, was hidden from them by some intervening object. As if by one impulse both the friends set up a shout, and the cry of "help! help!" rang out upon the night air and seemed to join in making the howling of the storm more weird and frightful. Soon came the answering cry of "where?" and by a continuous shouting, the answering party, which consisted of the young men, who with their lady friends had found shelter in the school house, were led to the top of a steep bank that arose on that side of the road at the spot where the two companions had found their dying Brother. One of the young men carried a lighted candle in a water bucket over which he carried his hat to protect his candle from the wind and the rain. A pathway up the bank was found near by, and by the aid of three or four of the new comers, the two friends managed to carry the apparently lifeless body up the bank, when the candle in the bucket was suddenly extinguished. But guided by the lights from the school house now plainly to be seen, the little company soon reached its gracious shelter, where the body was laid upon a dry shawl spread upon the floor by one of the young ladies. After their flight had a little passed away, the young ladies united with the gentlemen in endeavoring to bring back to life, him, who, to all appearances had already fled the regions of time, and found shelter in the realms of eternity. Beautiful cambric handkerchiefs were readily supplied to remove the mud and dirt from the face. The hands and feet were chafed by the anxious watchers, but all in vain. The lips of the dying man opened but once, and borne on that parting breath the attentive listeners heard the whispered words, "Darling Belle," and all that mournful company in the little wayside school house knew that Lawrence Clark had gone out forever, leaving his darling Belle, not to the cold charities of the world, but to the tender fostering care of his Masonic Brethren.

At about midnight the storm had spent its fury, the winds died away, the rain ceased to fall, the clouds rolled away, and the late moon arose to shed a little light upon the scene. Some of the young men from the school house hastened to the hotel and soon returned with an open wagon, in which the ladies and their companions found conveyance to their homes at the hotel. Colby and Newton remained with their Brother's lifeless body, which they watched until the coming of the Coroner in the morning. News of the finding of the dead man in the road, had spread like wild fire in that peaceful neighborhood, and before the sun had completed the first hour of his daily journey, a crowd had gathered at Gage's school-house to see for themselves the proof of the truth of the flying reports. The Coroner came early, a jury was readily empanelled, and an investigation of the cause of death was had. A learned doctor from the town was called to make the examination. His pockets were searched, but they were empty, he had neither pocket-book nor money. Some remembered to have seen him wear a fine gold watch and chain, but they, too, were gone. Upon removing his clothing about the region of the heart, a gash about an inch in width was found, from which oozed a little blood, showing where some deadly instrument had entered. "Murdered!" said