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JULY 8, 1908

MISTAKES OF NOAH.

Noah spent a hundred and twenty years in an effort to float his great life-saving enterprise and he had at last to make the concern a limited company and ring in his own family as stockholders in order to secure a board. From the fact that the rest of the world immediately afterwards went into liquidation it has been urged as a reason for his failure to arouse public interest that everybody was at the time tied up in amusement schemes and organizations for the promotion of matrimony. Modern critics claim that Noah's antediluvian methods were largely responsible for his failure to float the undertaking with the success that ought to have been possible with the nominal price at which the common stock was offered. With the judicious use of "water" this venture, which must have had the appearance of a land scheme rather than a marine enterprise, might have caught investors; but the ways of the modern promoter were unknown to the patriarch and his times, and men were as shy then of solid legitimate enterprises as they seem to be to-day. If Noah had only subsidized the local press with blocks of preferred stock and boomed the scheme, who knows but that a different story might have been handed down to posterity. Some criticize the whole conception and aim of the undertaking, and suggest that had it contemplated a daylight excursion to the Aurora Borealis or a midnight trip to the lower regions any kind of a price might have been put on the admission and it would have taken a whole police force to keep back the rush of fools. The higher critics may carp at Noah and poke fun at the ark, but the solemn truth conveyed by the story of the flood is as applicable to-day as when the "preacher of righteousness" tried for over a century to pound it into the pates of the giddy sensuous crowd over whom hung the dark cloud of Divine judgment. It is just as difficult to-day in the business, social and religious world to get people to entertain serious thoughts of the responsibility of life and its shadowy uncertainty as then. "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

As the mild-eyed, slow-spoken man turned from the car window to regard his seat companion, his gaze fell on the great letters heading the newspaper account of an accident. "That's the only way to do it," he said, half to himself.

"What's the only way?" asked the other man.

"Write it," said the mild-eyed man. "Then folks will read it; they won't listen to you telling it."

"If you've been in the most thrilling accident in the history of the nation, and begin to relate your experience, they'll sit with their mouths open!"

"No," echoed the other.

"No, sir," said the mild-eyed man; "it's so that the first time you stop for breath they can burst into the middle of your story to tell about the accidents they were in; or if they weren't ever in any, about the ones their father's great uncles or their second cousins-in-law were in."

"You speak bitterly," said his companion, with interest. "What experience have you had?"

"I was down in San Francisco the day of the earthquake," said the mild-eyed man, "and my hotel—"

"What hotel were you in?" asked the other. "My sister and her husband were in—"

"There!" said the mild-eyed man, and he turned his head to the window, and did not speak again, till he said good-bye as he clambered out over the other man's feet.

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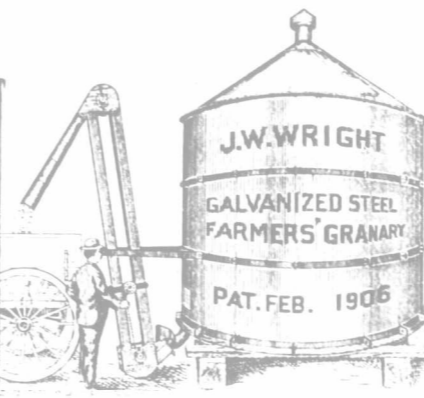
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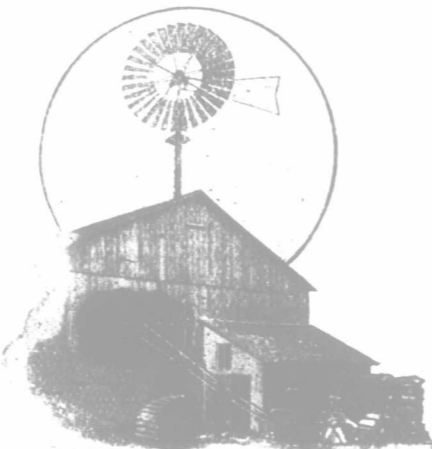
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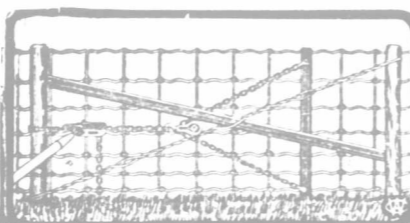
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